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Student Journalists and Mass Communication Ethics – Attitudes and Pedagogy

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STUDENT JOURNALISTS AND MASS COMMUNICATION ETHICS — ATTITUDES AND PEDAGOGY

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Abstract

Today's student journalists are creating work in an era of rapidly changing technology. Many of them have readership or viewership numbering in the thousands, and what they write and broadcast has an effect on people. While most professional journalists have studied ethics in school or discussed the subject in the workplace, many student journalists have not even had one ethics class. Many of them are seeking guidance as they grapple with ethical issues. This research studied 214 student journalists from every region in the United States through a survey of their attitudes towards ethical situations. The study discovered how they viewed situations that are forbidden in the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics, as well as additional situations that are considered unethical in some circumstances by professionals. This study points out that students practicing journalism need a complete portfolio of ethics theory and experiences to make the best possible ethical decisions. It is hoped that this information can be used to design effective ethics pedagogy for student journalists, ranging from informal discussions in their work on student media, to academic courses in mass communication or journalism ethics.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter, Bonnie. “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

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Soli Deo Gloria

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Introduction

Professional journalists frequently encounter situations that require them to make ethical decisions. They may need to balance the public's need to know with a subject's right to privacy, or to determine how much to edit a photo. They also must keep news independent of advertising and vice versa. Most professional journalists, if they have a degree in mass communication or something similar, have completed an ethics course or have at least studied ethical dilemmas as part of their coursework. They also learn from newsroom veterans. But what about student journalists? Almost every college campus, whether it is a two-year community college or a four-year university, has a student newspaper or website. Many schools have bona fide TV and radio stations as well. Some of these student media operate with a budget running at $1 million, and they have tens of thousands of viewers and readers. What students write and say matters.

This dissertation examines ethical attitudes among student journalists. It takes a close look at the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics and how student journalists view situations that are considered unethical in the Code. It does this through a survey of 214 student journalists across the country, asking managers, editors and content producers how they view 22 ethical situations and analyzing whether they recognize unethical behavior. In addition, it examines how students may or may not use the code when making ethical decisions. It investigates how they get their ethics training, whether it be informally through their work on student media or in the classroom. Since religion is closely tied to ethics, we also look at how religiosity can affect ethical decision making.

The dissertation first examines the canon of ethical literature, beginning with Aristotle's virtue ethics, Kant's deontological ethics and Mill's utilitarian ethics. It then moves toward Gilligan and Noddings' care ethics before exploring agape, existential, and communitarian ethics. How can these frameworks inform students as they make ethical decisions? The dissertation then looks at how religion has related to ethics in the literature and the role it plays in the lives of practicing journalists. The study also explores ethics pedagogy. In the late 1970s, the Hastings Center explored how ethics is taught in U.S classrooms. This dissertation looks at the outcomes for instruction recommended by the Hastings Center as well as pedagogical practices recommended for the instruction of ethics, both general and field specific. Since the survey is based heavily on the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics, this dissertation unpacks the code in detail looking at how ethical theories illuminate it. Journalism and mass communication have a rich canon of applied ethics that students should be using in their work on collegiate media. The dissertation explores notions of truth and objectivity as well as the revolution in digital photography and its effect on applied ethics of journalism and mass communication. There has been some scholarship on ethical attitudes of journalism and mass communication students and we will observe what has been undertaken so far before developing several hypotheses to be tested in the survey of student journalists.

The topic addressed in this dissertation is important because students create works that have an impact on the lives of those they cover. Students often make ethical decisions "on the fly" with little knowledge of the ethics of their profession (Fry, 1989;

Kostyu, 1990). Even if they are familiar with a professional ethics code, they don't always understand how to weigh the factors involved in normative ethics to make judgments about controversial decisions with conflicting or complex components. In 1989, Fry found that 90% of students had encountered an ethical dilemma in their work on student newspapers. At many institutions, student journalists work outside the formal curriculum, beginning to work on student media when they are sophomores or even freshmen. In many journalism programs ethics is not taught until the junior or even senior year, but students are working on college broadcast stations, newspapers, or websites when they are sophomores and even freshmen (Reinardy & Moore, 2007). And even if they have had an ethics course, they do not necessarily see the value in following an ethics code (Hardin & Hettinga, 2010). When a group of student journalists were surveyed by Fry (1989) about hypothetical ethical situations, their responses clearly indicated that they needed guidance.

The research in this dissertation contributes to the scholarly literature by bringing student journalists into the mix. We have some information on how professionals make ethical decisions (Boeyink, 1994; Coleman & Wilkins, 2002; García-Avilés, 2014; Joyce, Saldaña, Weiss, & Alves, 2017; Pritchard & Morgan, 1989; Voakes, 1997), but what about the thousands of collegiate journalists who publish and broadcast every day. How ethical are they? When do they receive ethics training? Do they even recognize an unethical situation when they see it?

Most people think they are ethical and have what ethicist Charles Starkey calls "moral commitment" (personal communication, March 9, 2018). Even so, Starkey says,

they often fail to act ethically because they don't recognize that there is something ethical in play. When working with students, it is important to point out that ethics involves much more than just "being on board" or "being for *goodness* [emphasis added]," says Starkey. Having sound moral perception takes training and experience. For example, when the student journalist lives in a suite with the student government president, she may find herself in a situation where she has to weigh the obligation she has to her suitemate with a broader duty to act as a watchdog over student government. But if she has not had any ethical training, she may not be able to determine which of these should win out or even that both of them should be considered.

Those who teach ethics need to provide students with a "portfolio" of experiences on which to base their ethical decisions. This "portfolio" is created when students look at real and hypothetical ethical situations and weigh them using specific ethical theories. Having many tools in their toolbox allows students to move beyond emotional decisions based on what "feels" right into non-arbitrary ways of making ethical decisions (C. Starkey, personal communication, March 9, 2018). Just because a student can take a picture of a student government leader passed out at a fraternity party and instantly post it to the 2,000 people who follow the student television station's Instagram account doesn't mean he should. Students need to be taught how to make ethical decisions based on more than mere emotions or what "feels" right when confronted with the new moral issues surrounding digital media.

After examining existing research in the realm of mass media ethics and applying it to the unique situations of student journalists, the following research questions were generated:

- RQ1: How would student journalists score when asked about ethical situations that might be violations of the SPJ code of ethics? The literature refers to a survey in the 1980s by the American Society of News Editors which asked working journalists about many specific situations covered in the SPJ code of ethics. Many of these questions were used as is or repurposed and updated for today's media landscape. While we know what professionals several decades ago think, this research gives us a clearer picture of student journalists in the 21st century.
- RQ2: Do students get formal or informal education about journalism ethics through their work on student media and in the classroom? Several studies looked at how ethics is taught in journalism programs, but no one looked specifically at students working on student media. What we do know is that a stand-alone ethics course is more effective than the "pervasive method" where ethics is taught informally in other journalism courses. However, a good percentage of student journalists have not had a stand-alone ethics course and some of them haven't even had a basic journalism course, so it is likely that their exposure to ethics is nonexistent. How is ethics conveyed to student journalists, if at all?

- RQ3: Do students know or use the SPJ code of ethics when making ethical decisions? In 2003, Hardin and Hettinga found that they didn't. Is this still true today? If our goal is for students to practice ethics professionally, how can we get this information to them? The first step is to find out if they have it or not, and if they do have it, whether or not they consult it.
- RQ4 Is "religiosity" a predictor of how students will view ethical situations? From Aristotle to the Dalai Lama, ethicists have looked to religious teachings as a foundation for ethics. Would students who consider themselves "religious" view ethical dilemmas in mass media differently than students who claim to be non-religious?
- RQ5 Do factors such as years of schooling or size of school affect ethical decision outcomes?

Once these questions are answered, we will have a better appreciation of how students get their ethics training and how they use what they know to make decisions. From there, we can use the specific research into ethics pedagogy to create a variety of experiences that will help students get the most from ethics training. This can range from encouraging informal discussions of ethics in the newsroom of student media, to workshops for student journalists, to formal ethics courses for mass communication students. A great deal has been studied about the most effective ways to instill an ethical compass in college students, and these techniques can be used when designing ethics training experiences for those on the collegiate press.

Review of Scholarship

Ethical Theories

Almost anyone who writes about ethics discusses three basic theories that have been around for hundreds, even thousands, of years. These theories are deontological, consequential (utilitarian), and virtue and should certainly be included as core material in ethics pedagogy, whether it be teaching ethics formally in a classroom or workshop or informally with student journalists on the job. These are basic tools that should be in their toolboxes. Deontological ethics emphasizes duties or rules, consequential ethics emphasizes the consequences of actions, and virtue ethics emphasizes virtues or moral character. Aristotle's focus on character and searching for the middle ground can help students as they grapple with the "right to know versus the right to privacy". Immanuel Kant's exploration of what it means to respect each person equally and how we can generalize our actions is also a beneficial guide for students as they explore their own ethical stances. John Stuart Mill's work on utilitarianism looked at consequences and the overall well-being of everyone involved, which would serve student journalists well in a world where those in the profession are often accused of not being concerned with the welfare of those they cover. All three points of view are important in the field of ethics, says Elliott:

> There are good reasons for Aristotle, Kant and Mill to be the theorists most often taught for application to practical ethics in that they bring three major aspects of ethical analysis: evaluation of the agent and the search for middle ground (from Aristotle), the importance of respecting each human equally in determining

> correct action and the ability to generalize our actions (from Kant), and the importance of looking at the consequences of the action on the overall good of the community or group involved (from Mill). . . (Elliott, 2007, pp 57–58).

Virtue Ethics (Aristotle)

To start at the beginning in ethics pedagogy, students need to understand Aristotelian virtue ethics. In their discussion of virtue ethics and professional roles, Oakley and Cocking (2001, p. 9) pointed out that with virtue ethics, the focus is on character. Right actions are those actions that a virtuous person would do in the circumstances, and what makes the action right is the fact that a person with a virtuous character would take it. But how do we become a person of virtuous character? Virtue ethicists would say that we develop *phronesis,* or "practical wisdom," through a life of contemplation and deliberation. This leads us to living a balanced life of equilibrium, balance, and proportion, which students can call upon when making ethical decisions on student media.

This flourishing life (*eudaimonia* in ancient Greek) calls on the principle of Aristotle's Golden Mean, which is often reduced by students to a "slogan," calling the ethicist to choose between the extremes of excess and deficiency (Wyatt, 2008). Students often understand Aristotle's Golden Mean to be kind of balancing between two extremes, but, according to Wyatt (2008), that is not exactly accurate. Focusing on such a shallow view of Aristotle's Golden Mean often leads those using it to choose between the two extremes of acting or not acting (publish the controversial photo or don't publish it, for example). This results in the "mean," or middle ground, always being a watered-down

version of the extreme of action. For example: let's say that a student on campus dies in a car accident. The student journalist is working on a story and grappling with the choice of contacting that student's family and friends for comment. On one extreme, the student can show up on a doorstep and ask penetrating, intrusive questions, ignore the grief of the student's loved ones, and go after the story. The other extreme, most students would say, is to not interview anyone at all. There is no midpoint that would call for *not* doing the action at all.

> When the extremes are defined as doing something or not doing it, the midpoint always involves action. Anything more excessive than not acting involves some kind of action. It's like a midpoint between standing still and running; anything between the two will always involve movement. The problem, however, is that action—in any form—may not align with being virtuous (Wyatt, 2008, p. 300).

She further points out that sometimes the most virtuous thing is not taking any action at all, and Aristotle did not intend to eliminate that choice. In the case of the students interviewing accident victims, perhaps the mean is to interview them humanely, being sensitive to their grief, and viewing the interview not only as an opportunity to get a story, but as an opportunity for the family to share their thoughts and emotions about the student who died. Or, perhaps, the most appropriate human action to take is to leave the family and friends alone and not interview them at all. This is a choice that must at least be considered as the appropriate one.

A modern voice in the arena of virtue ethics is Philippa Foot, who says that to be truly human, we have to be able to do more than take care of our natural needs, such as

shelter, food, and clothing. To be truly human, we have to be able to love and have friendship as well. In this interaction with others, we need codes of conduct that include a lot of ideas we find in ethical theories, such as loyalty, fairness, and kindness (Foot, 2001 p. 44).

Patrick Plaisance points out that coming up with a "global normative framework" in today's rapidly changing world of new technologies is challenging (2013). Today's students are faced with ethical problems on digital media that were unheard of even a decade ago. One digital tool that has opened the proverbial can of worms is Photoshop. How much editing is too much? Can we brush away facial blemishes? Can we change the color of someone's hair? Can we photoshop a basketball in when we didn't just capture it with the camera lens?

Plaisance proposed a neo-Aristotelian theory of "digital flourishing" based on virtue ethics, rather than the deontological, "universal" ethics proposed by most scholars. His claim is based on Aristotle's "eudaimonia," or "flourishing life," as described in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Plaisance argues that virtue ethics are as compelling as, if not more useful than, traditional deontological ethics in creating an ethical framework in today's digital world. "Rather than getting mired in philosophical thickets regarding the motives and duties of actors in the online world, a virtue ethics framework shifts our focus onto what behaviors and guidelines contribute to the "flourishing" of our digital lives" (Plaisance, 2013, p. 92). Unlike the calculating methods used in deontological and consequential ethics, virtue theories focus on a "habitual disposition to do the right thing" (Borden, as cited in Plaisance, 2013, p. 94). Plaisance calls for a shift away from

deductive moral claims to a "neo-Aristotelian understanding of human 'flourishing' as part of a more inductive approach" (2013, p. 94). So rather than a deontological duty to never Photoshop, students can weigh the factors that will most help them flourish as human beings and journalists. What would a person of sound moral character do in this digital age? When faced with new technological ethical dilemmas that may not have been addressed in textbooks, students can look to what makes them most human, rather than a set of do's and don'ts.

Deontological Ethics (Kant)

Students are inexperienced by nature, and often look for a list of what is acceptable and what is not. Deontological ethics is a subfield of normative ethics that focuses on duty and the rights of others, in contrast to virtue theories that focus on what kind of person we are or should be. The word *deontological* comes from the Greek word δέον, or "deon," which means "obligation" or "duty". Deontological ethics is concerned with the obligations and duties student journalists have. Google dictionary states that the root word started with the Greek "dei", which means, "it is necessary" and evolved to "deont," or "being necessary." The word initially appeared in the 1800s, and was first used to describe duty ethics by C.D. Broad (1887-1971) in his 1930 book, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (Mastin, 2008).

Deontological ethics is often described as duty or obligation-based ethics because it maintains that ethical rules hold people to their duty or obligations. And as journalists with constitutionally protected speech and access to a public platform, many would say

that collegiate journalists have special obligations and duties that can be found in ethics codes, as well as informal ways of doing things on a particular medium.

Although the word deontological wasn't used until the 19th century, the notion of duty-based ethics is usually traced back to Immanuel Kant, who wrote *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* in 1785. Kant starts out with a concept of pure reason. It is a law of nature, Kant says, that what goes up must come down. Toss a book into the air, and it will obey that law. But it will not, when it reaches its highest point, say to itself, "I ought to go back down now, for gravity requires it … As rational beings, however, we do in this way reflect on, and sometimes even announce to ourselves, the principles on which we act" (Kant, 1785/2009, p. xvi).

Yet, Kant points out, we human beings are not perfectly rational, since our desires, fears, and weaknesses may tempt us to act in irrational ways. For example, the rational journalist may know that it will hurt others if he plagiarizes a story, but his desire for fame, his fear of not writing a good story, or his weakness of not getting enough information by his own efforts tempts him to plagiarize. This opens up the possibility of a gap between how we actually act and the objective laws of practical reason. So, we need an objective rational law of "practical reason" telling us what we *ought* to do (Kant, 1785/2009, p. xvi).

When we are considering what we ought to do, we need to think of the "Categorical Imperative" that says we have to act as if our "maxim" was a universal law. The imperative is stated thus by Kant: "I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law (1785, p. 15). However,

many students have difficulty understanding what this means. Sometimes they reduce Kant's principle to something resembling the Golden Rule in Christianity: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". But the imperative means something more. Kant gives this example: A person in financial difficulties is considering "borrowing" money by making a false promise. He needs money and knows he will get it only if he says to another person, "I promise you I will pay you back next week". He also knows perfectly well that he will not be able to repay the money by then. Is it okay for the person needing money to make a promise he knows he cannot keep? Kant suggests that we start with a universal *maxim*; for example, "I will make a false promise in order to gain some ready cash". From there, make the maxim universal, a *law of nature*". This means that everyone who needs some ready cash makes a false promise. The person deliberating this ethical dilemma then should ask herself if this law of nature is a good law when applied to others. What if someone borrowed from me with a deliberately false promise to pay? This would mean that all promises are worthless and no one would ever lend money, knowing it wouldn't be repaid (Kant, xvi).

> For, the universality of a law that everyone, when he believes himself to be in need, could promise whatever he pleases with the intention of not keeping it would make the promise and the end one might have in it itself impossible, since no one would believe what was promised him but would laugh at all such expressions as vain pretenses (Kant, xvi).

Deontological ethics is usually contrasted with consequential ethics because of their fundamental differences in how we look at actions when confronted with ethical

decisions. The deontologist will look at the actions themselves and whether they are right or wrong. A consequentialist will look at the outcomes of those actions to determine what is ethically right or wrong (Mastin, 2008).

Consequentialism/Utilitarianism (Mill)

In his book on normative ethics, Shelly Kagan says that consequentialists believe an act is morally right (or morally permissible) if and only if it produces the best consequences (1998, p. 61). But as student journalists deliberate if they should spend a social evening with a member of student government, how are they to judge the "goodness" of an outcome? Spending time with a friend is good. However, giving the impression of favoritism is bad.

Consequentialists stress that everyone must be counted equally and the consequences must lead to the greatest well-being. In the literature of consequentialism and utilitarianism, authors employ mathematical formulas to determine what is the best outcome. These can be quite complex, as this example from J. C. Smart: "$V = p_1(a\text{-}f(I)) + p_2 (2a\text{-}f(2)) + p_3 (3a\text{-}f(3)) + P_m (ma\text{-}f(m))$" (1973, p. 60). Kagan offers the following scenario, and how a utilitarian might respond: Say you have $10 and you want to go to a movie. However, your friend approaches you and says he is collecting money to feed children dying of starvation, and $10 will save one child. What should you do with your $10? This can be determined by looking at outcomes. First, consider the pleasure you will get from seeing the movie. On a scale of 1-10, this may be a 5. But it doesn't count as much as saving the life of a child. On a scale of 1-10, saving a life may be a 10. Utilitarianism says you have to do what will cause the greatest good, and clearly the

outcome will be better if you give the money to charity rather than spending it on a movie.

By contrast, consequentialism says that you are required to perform the act that will have the best results overall. So (assuming that there is no third act available to you right now that would have even better results) you are indeed required to make the contribution. Going to the movie is morally forbidden (Kagan, p. 154). Smart sums up utilitarianism in this way:

> Suppose we could predict the future consequences of actions with certainty. Then it would be possible to say that the total future consequences of action A are such-and-such and that the total future consequences of action B are so-and-so. In order to help someone to decide whether to do A or to do B we could say to him: 'Envisage the total consequences A, and think them over carefully and imaginatively. Now envisage the total consequences of B, and think them over carefully. As a benevolent and humane man, and thinking of yourself just as one man among others, would you prefer to consequences of A or those of B?' (1973, p. 32).

A famous proponent of utilitarianism is John Stuart Mill, whom most journalists know as the author of *On Liberty*, with its strong arguments for freedom of speech and the marketplace of ideas. According to Mill, some types of pleasure are more valuable than others, and the best pleasures are those which use the *higher faculties* such as intellect, emotions and feelings, imagination, and moral sentiments. These things make us operate on a deeper level and use judgment and empathy. Mill summed this up with his

famous statement: “It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied” (Mill, 1863, p. 14).

All three classical moral philosophies are important tools to have in one’s toolbox for ethical deliberation:

> The key to applying classical moral philosophy in the study of practical ethics is to recognize that the different moral theories provide different tools that help us recognize and respond to particular moral features. Sometimes we need to consider how voluntary an action might be or how to avoid extreme reactions. Aristotle can give us a hand here. Or perhaps we need to think carefully about whether a person is being exploited or about what it would mean to be impartial when it is easier not to. Kant is good to consult on these matters. Maybe we need to think about what it means to create aggregate good and how to support the community’s interest. Now we want Mill at our side. But all of these questions may arise in the examination of a single case. (Elliott, 2007, pp. 57–58)

Even Wyatt, a proponent of virtue ethics, encourages her students to use all the tools they have at their disposal when considering ethical decisions. As persons of virtuous moral character, they will make a justifiable decision because the traits of good character that they have developed as virtuous persons inform their deliberations (Wyatt, 2008, p. 302). All three classical theories, as well as Rawl’s and his theory of justice, focus on the individual – choices, moral reasoning, character, etc. However, there are new paradigms of *systems thinking* that focus on the interrelated and interconnected aspects of human nature. Rogers describes these theories as moving a marble in a bowl

and watching all the other marbles shift (Moore, 2008, p. 2). Many of these new voices address the perception that journalists are uncaring, detached, and cold.

Communitarian Ethics

Journalism ethicist Clifford Christians, along with Fere and Fackler, has written extensively about a brand of ethics that is not duty nor consequentialism, but what he calls *Communitarian*. According to Christians, ethics always takes place in a community. In Aristotelian terms, the *polis* is more important than the individual members. Social systems both come before those who live in them and continue after we are dead (Christians, Fere & Fackler, 1993, p. 62). The press, however, sees itself as an atomistic watchdog rather than a part of the community that includes the government and business, even the businesses that own the press (Christians et al., 1993, p. 70). In the West, and especially the U.S. with its First Amendment protection of the press, the press still operates under Enlightenment ideas, say Christians et al., in their work on communitarian ethics.

> Whenever challenged, the press thrusts the First Amendment forward as a fetish to ward off the spirits of responsibility. The First Amendment is an effective talisman because the culture at large, and not just the press, is so infused with Enlightenment individualism . . . (Christians et al., 1993, p. 53).

Communitarians have pointed out that American journalists prize the right to publish speech and even protect it with the first amendment, but they don't usually pay attention to the people who are hurt by that speech. Do journalists ever tell their stories? Journalists, as key members of the polis, have a unique opportunity to choose which

stories they want to tell. “Communitarianism emphasizes mutual connections and concern among people,” writes David Craig in his work on communitarianism. “Stories are key elements in making a good and just world. They build mutual understanding and change communities, particularly stories that highlight injustice” (2006, p. 16). As the communitarian journalist pursues justice steadfastly, she will cover what needs to be covered, even if it is not financially profitable, even if it doesn’t advance her career (Craig & Ferre, 2006, p. 127).

Care Ethics

Craig points out that care ethics are also compatible with communitarian views (2006, p. 16). Nell Noddings describes it in this way:

> Caring involves stepping out of one’s own personal frame of reference into the other’s. When we care, we consider the other’s point of view, his objective needs, and what he expects of us. Our attention, our mental engrossment is on the cared for, not on ourselves. (Craig, 2006, p. 24)

This view of ethics was developed by Carol Gilligan in response to her teacher Lawrence Kohlberg’s theories of moral development, and their male-centric point of view. Coleman and Wilkins point out that Kohlberg’s stages of moral development focused on rights and justice, thus causing women, who put moral weight on caring for others, to systematically score lower. In addition to a respect for rights, we must also care for others, say Coleman and Wilkins (Wilkins & Christians, 2009, p. 43).

> As we have listened for centuries to the voices of men and the theories of development that their experience informs, so we have come more recently to

notice not only the silence of women but the difficulty in hearing what they say when they speak (Gilligan, 2016, p. 173–4).

Gilligan points out that the scale used to measure moral development has "generally been derived from and standardized on the basis of men's interpretations of research data drawn predominantly . . . from studies of males" so any female behavior that was different from male behavior tended to be seen as outside the norm. "Thus, when women do not conform to the standards of psychological expectation, the conclusion has generally been that something is wrong with the women" (Gilligan, 2016, p. 14.)

From a male point of view, maturity means a focus on achievement, competition, and winning with the goal of being autonomous. In a male point of view, caring relationships are seen as weak. Women, however, see themselves in relationships–they are nurturers, caretakers and helpers–they create and rely on a network of relationships. In moral situations, women are concerned first about care for others, to alleviate what is hurting them. Men care first about justice and the rights of others (Gilligan, 2016, p. 17).

Care ethics offers an alternative to the autonomous individual as the center of ethical analysis. Instead, the basic unit of analysis is relationships. It's not about what is best for individuals, but what will best serve the relationships involved. The dominant culture of America focuses on individuals and how to protect each participant's individual rights. In care ethics, solutions focus on what will best allow relationships to continue (Elliott, 2007, p. 63).

Since relationships rarely include individuals with equal power, status, and abilities, care ethics may require solutions that address the needs of the most vulnerable.

The narratives employed by professional journalists can help build relationships and caring responsibilities. The caring and compassionate journalist will thoughtfully choose topics to cover and sources for information (Craig, 2006, p. 22–23).

Agape Ethics

The Christian concept of agape, or unconditional, selfless love, offers another ethic of care, which does not have to be confined to those who identify with the Christian faith. According to Craig and Ferre, the concept of agape is based on the way the God of the New Testament in the Bible loves: unconditionally, regardless of how worthy the object of love is and universal (love is extended to all, not just our loved ones). The word "agape" comes from a Hebrew word *hesedh* which means steadfast commitment and is described in the well-known Biblical passage of 1 Corinthians 1 that describes love as patient and kind (Craig & Ferre, 206, p. 125). One way agape differs from other religious principles of love, even selfless love, is that we are called to love our enemies as well as those who are unlovable and unlikeable. Craig and Ferre explain how agape love can be applied to journalism. First, the journalist should stand up for those who are marginalized or treated unjustly. The Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics calls for journalists to "treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect" and to exercise "compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage". Journalists should also show "special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects" (Craig & Ferre, 2006, p. 127). Agape looks at the motivation of the agent rather than the act itself.

> Agape's commitment to others and regard for their value is consistent with the steadfast commitment of journalists from the muckrakers of the early 20th century to current investigative reporters who speak up for people who are ill-treated and those who lack political or economic power. Such dedication stands in sharp contrast with, and calls into question, acts of care that are motivated primarily by market interests—a desire to draw higher audiences—or the desire to advance one's career by telling people's sad and difficult stories (Craig & Ferre, 2006, p. 128).

Agape love additionally calls the journalist to love those he disagrees with and those who oppose him, which Craig and Ferre say is a radical idea (2006, p. 129). This means that the journalist will cover even those whose views he finds repugnant, such as the Ku Klux Klan and serial killers. This doesn't mean that the journalist has to cover them positively, but that she will not try to harm them, for example, by using inflammatory language, and that her coverage will be just.

> If people are to love those who oppose or even endanger them, then by implication journalists should treat even the most irksome news sources fairly. They should also go out of their way to portray fairly the positions of those individuals or groups with whom they strongly disagree or are confident have acted corruptly (Craig & Ferre, 2006, p. 130).

It also means that the journalist has to expose corruption, not by gleefully taking delight in bringing down the corrupt, but by being fair and just with the motivation to prevent harm. (Craig & Ferre, 2006, p. 130) Yet, agape love does not have to always be

objective. There are times that caring for the hurting and loving justice means that the journalist may need to seek ways to prevent harm and benefit those who are oppressed.

> The care for the hurting and vulnerable that agape implies stands in tension with the professional notion that reporters should portray issues in a balanced, disinterested way (acknowledging that complete impartiality is impossible within the constraints of one's subjectivity and may not even be desirable) (Craig & Ferre, 2006, p. 135).

Craig and Ferre point out that this is where a thoughtful opinion piece, labeled as such, has its place in journalism.

Existential Ethics

In 2012, Kristoffer Holt offered existential authenticity as a way to address the issues raised in a post-modern world. "Existentialist thinkers such as Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Martin Heidegger all expressed disapproval or ambivalence about the effects of mass media," said Holt (2012, p. 2). He added, "There is a dimension of media-criticism in existential thought that reacts against mediated sensationalism, shallowness, and 'idle talk.' Existentialism reveals anxieties about the consequences of levelling, alienation, and anonymity resulting from an increasingly artificial, superficial, and media saturated milieu" (Holt, 2012, p. 2).

Holt points to work done by John C. Merrill in his 1977 book, *Existential Journalism*, as the beginning of an existential approach to journalism ethics. In his book, Merrill called on those in media to reject a *herd mentality* and to embrace freedom and responsibility. Instead of following specific codes, ethical paradigms, and guides, Merrill

claims that these things encroach on an individual's freedom to determine what is right and good. Merrill suggested that the existential approach to ethical decisions would include following one's own conscience rather than what the profession demands (Holt, 2012, p. 3). This type of nonconformist ethics would be a comfortable position for many journalists who tend to be rebellious spirits and enjoy upsetting the status quo.

Existential ethics would be appealing, as it calls for a journalist to first be true to self before outside ethic's codes. Holt admits that this approach could create an ethics that is "completely arbitrary, subjective and possibly dangerous, because it encourages journalists to stop following norms and guidelines" (Holt, 2012, p.8). However, Holt cites Merrill's arguments that other factors would come into play, such as Sartre's notion of individual action as categorical imperative, Nietzsche's and Heidegger's "inner voice of conscience" and, for Christian existentialists, the Golden Rule, agape, and concern for others (Holt, 2012, p. 8). Rather than flying in the face of acceptable ethical norms, Holt says, "Becoming authentic means becoming something of a Nietzschean über-journalist: finding the courage to be a person who acts ethically but on grounds that lie beyond conventional moral codes" (Holt, 2012, p. 8–9). Such an individualized ethics would allow journalism students, who are small players in the "large apparatus of journalistic institutions" to be true to what they consider right and good rather than what the profession of journalism or the journalism school considers morally acceptable. Holt believes that existential journalism would allow young aspiring journalists the opportunity to be true to what they believe, rather than sacrificing it on the altar of gainful employment. The incorporation of existential journalism in an ethics curriculum

would allow students to explore their own personal codes of ethics before choosing whether or not to conform to a code.

The Role of Religion in Journalism Ethics

Religion and ethics have always been closely connected. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle mentions God/gods twice as often as he mentions happiness. Kant learned the notion of the categorical imperative from his Lutheran upbringing. And the Judeo-Christian ethics of love has permeated ethics in western cultures (Christians, 2008, pp. 199–200). It is interesting that E.W. Scripps, one of the earliest developers of the newspaper chain, said he believed that the ethical values in the Bible were good for journalism. Although he labeled himself an atheist, when he retired in 1908 he included the Ten Commandments in his guidelines for newspaper editors to follow (Knight, as cited in Underwood, 2001, pp. 33–34). More recently, the Dali Lama, in his 2001 book *Ethics for the New Millennium,* claims that when we look too much in the direction of science and not enough towards religion there is "mounting confusion" about how we are to conduct ourselves morally (2001, pp. 10–11). Media ethicist Clifford Christians said that even though religion is no longer the primary authority in ethics, it is still relevant. He posited that we cannot understand ethics without considering all the world's great religions (Christians, 2008, p. 198).

Role of Religion in Journalists' Lives

Several researchers have investigated how religion plays a role in the lives of journalists. Certainly, there have been many critics claiming that journalists are social liberals who are indifferent, if not antagonistic, toward religion, especially Christianity.

Underwood and Stamm say that most researchers have come to a different conclusion. For example, their 1998 study (*n*=422) found that many journalists, whether or not they identify themselves as people of faith, have a "strong general religious orientation." They surveyed American and Canadian journalists by asking them about their religious beliefs and how they put those beliefs into action in their professional lives. They examined the journalists' religious views by asking them how important religion/spirituality was in their lives, how their religious beliefs were derived, belief in God, and their attitudes about various sources of ethics and morals, including the Bible, universal ethics, other faiths, gut feelings, etc. Underwood and Stamm found that religion reporters were the most likely to say that religion was important or very important to them (85%) followed by investigative reporters (73%) and the other journalists surveyed (67%). The study found that even nonreligious journalists "responded strongly to fundamental calls for moral action" (2001, p. 771).

In 1992, Weaver and Wilhoit followed up on studies done in 1971 and 1982–83 on the characteristics of the American journalist. They did extensive interviews with 636 U.S. daily newspaper journalists at daily and weekly newspapers, radio and television stations, and news services and magazines throughout the United States. In their 1996 book based on those findings, Weaver and Wilhoit found that 38% of all journalists say religion is very important to them, while 61% of Americans say religion is very important (Buddenbaum, 1997). Buddenbaum, who has interviewed many journalists in regard to religion, cautions that one needs to interpret these numbers carefully:

> Socialized to professional norms that encourage them to avoid or downplay anything that could be construed as detracting from their position as neutral, outside observers, religion reporters purposefully avoid leadership roles that could be construed as a conflict of interest in their professional work. Their answers to questions about religious activity reflect their recognition that they are not as active as they could be, and perhaps would like to be. (Buddenbaum, 1997).

She further cites a 1996 survey of 1,037 journalists at 61 newspapers conducted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors which found that few journalists attributed their ethics to their religious beliefs (Buddenbaum, 1997).

In the summer of 1988, Underwood investigated the connection between religion and journalism with a survey sent to daily newspaper journalists in the United States and Canada (*n*=432). The results showed that 72% of those responding said religion or spirituality was important or very important in their lives. While they didn't necessarily cite any specific religious teachings or sacred writings, Underwood concluded that the journalists surveyed expressed core values that were consistent with the dominant Judeo-Christian traditions of American and Canadian cultures (Underwood, 2001, p. 39). It is also interesting to note that 67% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, "Christian values should underpin journalistic values" but over 53% agreed with the statement, "Journalistic values should draw on the ethical and moral traditions of all great religions" (Underwood, 2001, p. 45). Underwood concluded:

> It is no surprise to find that the modern journalist—so influenced by the scientific revolution and the rational skepticism of the Enlightenment—might spurn the

> notion that his or her ethical obligations should grow openly out of religious duty. However, whether they explicitly affirm it or not, journalists can still be seen as personifying the old religious virtues as they are reflected in their ethical and moral stances (Underwood, 2001, p 46).

Religious Literacy

In 2015, Jeremy J. Littau was interested in the "religious literacy" of American journalism students. While his concern was more with whether or not journalists could understand and report on religious imagery used by sources, the findings give a picture of the religiosity of students who would one day enter the profession. In fact, Littau found that students studying mass communication (public relations, photojournalism, advertising, print, convergence, broadcast, and magazine) did not earn higher scores on religious knowledge than those who were not mass communication majors.

> Few students could name even one of the five pillars of Islam (13.5%) or one of the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism (4.0%). Questions about the Ten Commandments (72.1% could name at least four) or the Golden Rule (71.8%) were the ones that garnered the most correct responses, but given the heavily Christian sample that should not be surprising (Littau, 2015, p. 155).

In fact, none of the majors, including non-mass communication majors, passed the 60% threshold for religious literacy established by Prothero in 2007.

Ethics Pedagogy

One does not become an ethical journalist just by practicing journalism, but ethics, as Aristotle pointed out, comes through deliberation and the building of character.

This begins almost as soon as a child learns how to communicate and understand what is going on around her, but it can be mindfully taught in the mass communication ethics classes offered by a majority of journalism programs across the country. Nancy Matchett points out that ethical deliberation is not just for those specialized issues we encounter as working journalists, but it is something we do all the time. Every time we make a choice, we are choosing what we value and we are revealing what kind of person we are (Moore, 2008, p. 31).

Of course, the ethics classroom itself needs to be ethical, and the teacher needs to be an example of an ethical person. There has been some debate in the literature about whether or not the ethics professor should give her personal point of view on the issues being discussed. Deni Elliott pointed out that students are often looking for concrete conclusions from an authority. Even when the professor attempts to be in the neutral center, and balances readings and devotes equal time to all sides of an argument, students are inevitably curious about what the authority figure in the classroom thinks about the issue. However, Elliott suggests that, at times, professors are permitted to reveal their personal viewpoints in the ethics classroom. She points out the reverse psychology inherent in keeping an opinion cloaked, saying that this makes the professor's opinions more intriguing and distracts students from the *range of argumentation* that surrounds the ethical situation as they focus on solving the "particular, and personal enigma of the professor's private opinion" (Elliott, 2007, p. 29). A study in 2015–16 showed that professors are still close to evenly divided as to whether the professor should be completely neutral or "unmasked" (Cooper, 2017, p. 25).

Even if the professor does offer a personal opinion, bell hooks points out that she cannot have the role of an all-knowing, all-powerful demigod. As teachers, we can also grow through the process of teaching. hooks points out that discussing ethics can be a vulnerable activity, and the teacher can model vulnerability in the classroom by sharing times they made questionable ethical decisions before asking students to give their ethical opinions.

> Professors who expect students to share confessional narrative but who are themselves unwilling to share are exercising power in a manner that could be coercive. In my classrooms, I do not expect students to take any risks that I would not take, to share in any way that I would not share (hooks, 2014, p. 20).

Hastings Center Outcomes for Ethics Instruction

In the late 1970s, the Hastings Center in New York, funded by the Carnegie Foundation, studied moral development and the ethics classroom in the United States. It concluded that the best ethics courses would provide students with concepts and analytical skills that would enable them to grapple with broad ethical theory in attempting to resolve both personal and professional dilemmas, as well as to reflect on the moral issues facing the larger society (Hastings, 1980, p. 67). The Hastings study came out with several recommended outcomes for an ethics course.

First, the course should stimulate the moral imagination by eliciting empathy, feeling, caring, and sensibility. Abowitz enumerated the results of an ethics course that does this successfully: “The moral imagination is our capacity to think of alternatives, to interpret situations beyond what is available to be known with certainty, and to formulate

notions and ideals of ourselves and our worlds beyond what we currently experience or know as reality" (2007, p. 288). But an ethics course should also address the cognitive side of biases and consequences. The course needs to go beyond the abstract and intellectual. Students need to know that they live in a moral world and that the decisions they make can cause real suffering or happiness (Hastings, 1980, p. 48).

Second, an effective ethics course should enable students to recognize ethical issues and determine what to do with the emotional responses elicited in the first step. Courses should emphasize that many technical, social, psychological, and political problems raise fundamental questions of right and wrong, good and bad, says the Hastings Center report. "A course in ethics should strengthen an ability to detect hidden value biases and tacit moral premises and to discern when and how issues of morality are present - human rights, for instance, or conflicting moral obligations" (Hastings, 1980, p. 49). In addition, a capacity to sift out ethical issues and to see the moral implications of individual and collective decisions are all-important teaching goals, the report states (1980, p. 49). Deni Elliott agrees. She said that ethics instructors should help students become aware of their own values and how they are used in determining how to behave. Part of this involves teaching the values that are important to the profession and helping students compare and contrast their own values with what the profession expects (Elliott, 2007 pp. 42–43).

Third, the ethics course should help students develop analytical skills. They must, of course, master basic ethical and value theory, but should also be able to apply it to specific problems and moral dilemmas. Mass communication ethics courses often focus

on those problems that come up while practicing journalism or public relations, but do not include forays into the thoughts of Aristotle, Kant, Noddings and others.

> It is critically important that students receive an introduction to the serious literature on ethics. They should come to know that there is such a literature, that others have wrestled seriously with the problems they are encountering for the first time, and that familiarity with the literature is most likely to serve them best in the long run (Hastings, 1980, p. 71).

Elliott adds that students should have practice in in analyzing "tough philosophical concepts such as confidentiality, privacy, justice, deception, promise keeping, moral casualty, blameworthiness, and praiseworthiness". They need to consider the difference between what is permitted morally and what is required as well as what is a minimal ethical choice and what would be an ideal choice (Elliott, 2007, pp. 42–43).

Fourth, the ethics course should solicit from students a sense of moral obligation and personal responsibility.

Finally, the course should tolerate disagreement and ambiguity as well as equip students to resolve them. Disagreement is inevitable in almost any academic subject, certainly in an ethics course. Often there is no clear answer or resolution, but students are often tempted to push until there is consensus. The effective ethics teacher will allow students to listen to all sides and work towards a resolution that is sometimes ambiguous (Hastings, 1980, p. 51).

One goal you won't find in the Hastings report is changing student behavior, which the report says was the most troublesome issue it had to face (Hastings, 1980, p.

54). While many educators believe there is no point in teaching an ethics course unless it will assure improvement in student conduct, the Hastings committee members concluded that this is not an appropriate explicit goal for a course in ethics. Additionally, bringing about changes in behavior might tempt professors to manipulate students, which in itself is unethical. The Center points out that it would be difficult to define what constitutes improvement, and this is a question better left to students in ethics courses to debate (Hastings, 1980, p. 54). Cooper's more recent study of ethics teachers in the Pacific region found much the same response, with most saying that moral growth or "becoming a better person" cannot be taught, but thinking clearly, systematically, or knowledgably about moral decision-making can be taught (Cooper, 2017, p. 25).

Techniques in Teaching Ethics

Freestanding Ethics Course vs. Pervasive Methods. It wasn't until the early 1990s that most mass communication programs had an ethics course that was separate from a law class or a part of another journalism class. In 1992–93 Lambeth, Christians and Cole (1994) surveyed journalism and mass communication ethics instructors and found that the number of "separate, free-standing media ethics courses" had increased by 56% since 1982 (p. 20). Some 325 journalism and mass communication programs were surveyed from listings in the 1992–93 AEJMC Directory with 80% (n=260) responding.

The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication held a workshop with the Freedom Forum and determined that "the most effective approach to media ethics instruction is a required media ethics course coupled with appropriate modules on ethics taught in every course in the journalism curriculum and coupled with a

school or departmental administration committed to an overall ethical environment within the JMC unit" (Lambeth et al., 1994, p. 25).

The issue was revisited again in 2005 when Groshek and Conway conducted a longitudinal survey of student attitudes towards plagiarism and fabrication during their years in a journalism program that did not have a freestanding ethics course, but where ethics was taught in what was dubbed "the pervasive method". This approach to ethics does not include a separate, freestanding ethics course, but ethics instruction is taught more organically in a number of journalism/mass communication classes. Groshek and Conway studied a sample of 5,060 students from a major public university in the Midwest during nine consecutive semesters as they entered and completed a program of study in mass communication. They concluded that the pervasive method was also an effective pedagogical tool, although they did emphasize that is was not better than a freestanding ethics course (2012, pp., 337, 342). They determined that students were both concerned about and expected harsh penalties for journalistic plagiarism and fabrication. Additionally, they found that students became significantly more concerned about professional ethics and expected significantly harsher penalties at the end of their college program than they were at the beginning (2012, p. 341).

The Use of Tools and Paradigms. A 2017 study of various instructional approaches to ethics education shows that a mix of activities and delivery styles is the most effective way to teach ethics. "While some instructional approaches appear to be more effective, few, if any, training types should be abandoned altogether based on the findings of the present study" (Mulhearn, Agel, & Fiore, 2017, p. 898). One of the most

effective methods is studying the processes and strategies used in ethical decision making. This type of training gives students tools that can manage the ambiguous, ill-defined nature of ethical decisions (Mulhearn et al., 2017, pp. 899–900). When we are deciding between two good choices or two bad choices, having a process to apply to the problem can be helpful.

Case Study Approach. Case studies are a very popular way of teaching mass media ethics, says Hanson, and it is an approach recommended by the Hastings report. Lambeth, Christians and Cole (1994) found that virtually all (98.2%) of media ethics instruction uses them (p. 24). Case studies allow students to get a feel for what they will confront as professionals and materials are easy to find. The Hastings report (1980) pointed out that students understand better, remember longer, and develop higher order learning when they are actively engaged in the activity. Problems need to be relevant, which makes mass media case studies ideal. But there also needs to be a logical progression of steps to solve them. This is where theory comes in.

Some, however, have pointed out challenges inherent in using case students. For example, case studies place students in situations in which they must decide how to resolve an ethical issue. “In nearly every instance, case studies require students to adopt the role of a media professional, which may point students (perhaps unwittingly) in the direction of following accepted or current industry norms” (Hanson, 2002, p. 237). Some criticize case studies because they often approach ethical situations from a media manager’s point of view rather than the entry-level point of view most beneficial to students. This brings up a critical point in media ethics courses. Students are usually in

entry level positions as they work on student media, in internships, and begin their careers, but case studies usually involve the kind of situations encountered by seasoned journalists (Hanson, 2002, p. 237).

Elliott points out the two distinct levels used in case study analysis. The students must begin with conceptualization where they clarify ethical issues, identify the agents, and determine who could reasonably be held blameworthy or praiseworthy. The next level is justification, where students must determine if there is adequate reason for causing harm. At this level, students must justify why some acts are morally prohibited, others are morally permitted, some are required, and yet others are morally ideal (Elliott, 2007, p. 89).

Class Discussions. Inherent in any class on ethics is a component of class discussion, and several researchers have pointed out the benefits and challenges in this type of pedagogy. hooks points out that discussions often become heated or even loud. This makes some students, especially those from upper/middle class backgrounds, uncomfortable, as they find it rude and threatening. Yet students from working class backgrounds enjoy the intense debate. Many teachers are also from upper/middle class backgrounds and may find these types of discussions threatening. Instead of shutting them down, teachers can encourage civil, yet heated discussion, and encourage students to learn to accept this type of debate (hooks, 2014, p. 185).

Noddings points out that there is a natural caring relationship between teachers and students. When we listen to students, for that moment they are the most important thing in the classroom. What they say matters. By responding to them, asking for more

information, and encouraging them to participate, we demonstrate that they are cared for and model this type of ethical paradigm (Noddings, 1986, p. 176).

A 2017 study of students in the Pacific region found that the successful ethics classroom is one where the faculty member Socratically and consistently challenges students' assumptions, opinions, beliefs, and the status quo. While students frequently found the nature of ethical and philosophical thinking challenging and unsettling to their desire for closure, quick solutions, and moral simplicity, often they later found it rewarding and relevant (Cooper, 2017, p. 26).

Finally, in today's digital world, there is room for online discussion, even in classes that are meeting live. hooks points out that white males tend to dominate class discussions, while students of color and some white women fear they will be judged or will be seen as inadequate if they talk (hooks, 2014, p. 39). We need to pay attention to issues of "voice". Who speaks and who listens? Students are not just passive consumers. All voices are needed in a learning community. An online discussion allows those students who are usually not heard to participate, and if the online discussion is required, it forces normally reticent students to take part.

The Use of Ethics Codes. In 1999, Mark Braun compared student and instructor perceptions of pedagogy; part of his survey included perceptions of media ethics codes. Students were asked how instructors should use these codes in a media ethics course, and responses varied widely depending on the school setting. Two-year college students were twice as likely to view industry ethics codes as positive contributions to an ethics classroom than the combined students surveyed. They were four times as likely as

professors to view the codes as a benefit to the classroom. Interestingly, two-year students were also much more likely than professors or the combined surveyed students to view ethics codes as "essentially economic, self- interested, and protectionistic rather than ethical" (Braun, 1999, p. 177). In addition, two-year college students were much less likely than professors or other students to find it necessary to critically examine and evaluate professional ethics codes.

A 1992–93 survey of journalism and mass communication ethics instructors (Lambeth et al., 1994) generated some interesting information about the use of ethics codes in media ethics courses, the very courses that student journalists would be exposed to while practicing their craft in student media. Only 13.4% of respondents viewed ethics codes as a "positive contribution to the profession". A small number of instructors, 2.4%, even said that they presented ethics codes as "useless and impractical" and 1.8% did not present them at all (Lambeth et al., 1994, p. 23). If students have ambiguous exposure to ethics codes in their courses, it will be all the more difficult for them to make the lightning fast judgments needed when they practice the profession at the student newspaper or on the student television station.

The Aesthetic Experience. According to Abowitz, aesthetic experiences develop moral perception and imagination, which is the first outcome recommended for an ethics course in the Hastings Center reports. Abowitz says moral situations are not best judged by someone who is detached, but by someone who is passionate about the issue (Abowitz, 2007, pp. 295–296). First, the heart becomes involved; then, the rational process kicks in (Blasco, Moreto & Pessini, 2018). Poems, paintings, gardens, sculpture,

music, textiles, and more engage our cognitive, emotional, and sensual capacities. Abowitz recommends visual experiences, especially for this generation of students who have been enculturated to understand visual representations (2007, p. 292). But other experiences are also valid. Music, for example, absorbs us but also immediately heightens our awareness of the elements of the song. It helps us to "see": to experience a situation more fully, more perceptively (Abowitz, 2007, p. 293).

Abowitz showed students in his ethics class a painting entitled, *Hey, Let's Have Some Red Man/The Arraignment* created by Philip Morsberger. It depicts a white man reaching into a pack of Red Man chewing tobacco with a smile on his face and the smiling faces of other white men around him. These are the murderers of the three civil rights workers. Morsberger painted Red Man from a photograph of the smiling, laughing killers sitting in the courtroom of their own arraignment. The students had been instructed to look at the painting carefully, noting what they saw, what they thought it meant, and what emotional responses it evoked. According to Abowitz, the aesthetic experience called up a range of emotions and desires, and these occupied a central part of a discussion of the experience held back in the classroom. The emotional impact of the aesthetic experience was part of why students found the experience to be powerful (Abowitz, 2007, p. 295).

When exposing students to aesthetic experience, the instructor's role consists not just in pouring out emotions, but he or she must be good at moving the audience from emotions to personal reflection on how they can incorporate the lessons leaned into their daily lives (Blasco et al., 2018). "With attention to the canvases, passions are evoked that

relate to racism and violence as well as love and hope. These passions provoke thinking, the reasoning that helps us to form new ends and new ideas about our shared moral lives" (Abowitz, 2007, p. 295).

Movie Clips. Movie clips are another aesthetic experience with additional benefits (Blasco, et al., 2018). By allowing students to experience another life, movies have a cathartic effect, they said. "Catharsis literally means to 'wash out' the feelings retained in the soul. It also implies an organizing process in which the person sorts through, orders, and makes sense of emotions" (2018). Blasco and his colleagues used movie clips in classes with medical students; however, they didn't use medical movies, but instead used a series of clips that illustrated various points, along with added narration.

> Young people today live in a dynamic and sensitive environment of rapid information acquisition and high emotional impact. In this context, it makes sense to use movie clips because of their brevity, rapidity, and emotional intensity. Bringing clips from different movies, to illustrate or intensify a particular point, fits well with the dynamic and emotional nature of students' experience. Nevertheless, the purpose is not to show students how to incorporate a particular attitude, but rather to promote students' reflection (Blasco et al., 2018).

The narration from a facilitator is vital, according to Blasco and colleagues. The suddenly changing scenes engage the viewer and encourage reflection, and the running commentary by a narrator fosters reflection, they said. At times the viewer may even disagree with the narration, but that is not a negative outcome, and may even be

desirable. “This point-counterpoint deepens reflection, while still enabling participants to draw their own conclusions” (Blasco et al., 2018). In fact, after the experience students said this helped them reach a third place that was neither the clip nor the narration.

There are many movies dealing specifically with journalism ethics, but mass communication students do not necessarily need to watch movies about media ethics to have an aesthetic experience. Blasco and colleagues recommended several movies that promote reflection on personal ethics, and many of them deal with ethical situations often encountered by journalists. One such movie is *Brubaker*, based on the experiences of an Arkansas prison warden who is hired by the governor to reform the state correctional system. He embarks on a crusade that uncovers awful conditions, corruption, extortion, and horrific prison torture. Brubaker is pulled in two directions by conflicting values. He uncovers burial plots for hundreds of bodies in a field near the prison, most buried years earlier. This embarrasses the governor. On the one hand, he wants to reveal the truth about what he is discovering. On the other hand, by doing so, he jeopardizes his job, his career, and puts prisoners in danger. This mirrors conflict of interest situations often faced by professional journalists. Other films Blasco recommends include *All the President’s Men*, which is an excellent film focusing on a journalistic ethical dilemma, *Norma Rae*, *Million Dollar Baby*, *Remember the Titans*, and *The Diving Bell and The Butterfly*.

Howard Good has compiled a list of movies that can be used to teach specific ethical points related to mass communication in his 2008 book, *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies*. Some examples include *Absence of Malice*, wherein the journalist

protagonist determines if deception is ever warranted to get a story; *The Year of Living Dangerously*, which shows us a journalist who has gone far beyond objectivity; and *Shattered Glass,* which explores the lure of fabrication.

Pedagogical Conclusions

By 1996, journalism ethics professors had many texts from which to choose for their courses and a canon of philosophical approaches to ethical decision-making had emerged. The canon includes Kant's Categorical Imperative, Aristotle's Golden Mean, Judeo-Christian ethics, Mill's Principle of Utility, Rawls's Veil of Ignorance, and Ross's Prima Facie Duties. These normative ethical theories were joined by specific models for ethical decision-making found in many mass media ethics' textbooks. Some of the models include the Potter Box, Sissela Bok's model for ethical decision making (in general and for deception specifically), the Poynter Institute checklist of questions to make good ethical decisions, Deni Elliott's guidelines for ethical reflection, the issue-specific checklists (for privacy, deception, diversity, etc.) developed by Black, Steele, and Barney, and Rushworth Kidder's checklist for ethical decision making (Baker, 1997, p. 197). Paul Martin Lester, Editor-in-Chief of Journalism and Communications Monographs, offers a ten-step "Systematic Ethical Analysis (SEA)" for analyzing case studies. (Lester, 2012).

In 1999, researchers checked in again on student perceptions of ethics courses. Braun surveyed college students (n=174) in a variety of educational settings, seeking their views of media ethics pedagogy, especially in light of previous research on instructor techniques and goals. Braun found that instructor and student goals were not

correlating, especially "marked discrepancies between professor and student views on ethical standards employed, values systems examined, and teaching techniques preferred" (Braun, 1999, p.171). Students were not interested in learning about "universal ethics" but agreed that they should respect "pluralistic principles" as well as "examine various cultural interpretations of media ethics" (Braun, 1999, p. 171).

Context of Practicing Student Journalists

Today's student journalists are operating in an arena that was not even imagined by those in the profession 50 years ago. The 2016 U.S. presidential election demonstrated that the workings of new media continue to surprise even those who study the phenomenon. Donald Trump's use of new media is one example, according to Ralph Schroeder of the Oxford Internet Institute (2018). Trump bypassed traditional gatekeepers (the professional journalists in traditional media) in his presidential campaign by using Twitter and other social media. Usually mainstream media, which have earned elite status and prestige over years of political and investigative reporting of the very highest quality, control what is discussed in political elections. Traditional newspapers such as the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*, by setting the agenda for discussion, determine what is talked about around office water coolers as well. Trump's masterful use of non-traditional media, such as Twitter, proves that this elite setting of the political discussion can be challenged by non-elite forces; usually new media, such as social media and Internet blogs (Schroeder, 2018, p. 335). Student journalists are typically early adopters of new technologies, and today have already moved beyond Twitter to more visual platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, as well as

YouTube, for their political discussions. While traditional newspapers have created websites that largely mirror the printed publications, with more visuals and possibly some video, student websites are experimenting with video, infographics, and memes.

The hardware of new media itself is also changing. In the introduction to their eBook, *Small Tech: The Culture of Tools*, Byron Hawk and David M. Rieder used the term "small tech" to describe the miniaturized technology, such as smart phones and digital cameras, that bridge the virtual space of the Internet with the open space of everyday life (Hawk, Rieder, & Oviedo, 2008). This miniaturization process will lead to small tech that knows no boundaries (2008, p. x). Hawk and Reider associate small tech with so-called "weightless" economies that encompass the value of goods, services and techniques that are not physical and "increasingly define the leading edges of first-world economies" (2008, p. x). Computers, they say, are so powerful that their size no longer indicates their power, processing capacity, or value.

Today's student journalists are working in media environments that are miniaturized and weightless. They are also "virtual". The term "virtual reality" is used often to define something that is the opposite of real or material, but Pierre Levy defines the word virtual through the medieval derivation of the terms *virtualis* and *virtus*, which refer to "potentiality" (quoted in Hawk et al., 2008, p. xii). Digital technologies that are small and weightless create "potential human action, connection, and communication" (Hawk, Rieder, & Oviedo, 2008, pg. xii). While weightless and virtual objects may not be bound by physical laws, they do exert force in the real world, Hawk and Rieder point out (2008).

Student Journalists and New Media.

As expert users of these small tech tools and professional content creators, today's student journalists must be able to analyze ethical situations and make moral decisions in new media environments. A contemporary pedagogy of ethics needs to be based on theories that take into account the way new media works. As Schroeder points out, "Theories that were suited to mass media and interpersonal communication are no longer suited for digital media -- since new media often have elements of both" (2017, p. 324). For example, the traditional model of mass communication includes a single-entity "sender" disseminating a message to a multiple-entity, usually passive "receiver." But today's new media found in blogs, social media, and interactive news websites includes an explosion of user-generated content, often created in bricoleur fashion through Wikis and other interactive methods.

Deni Elliott points out that the 21st century has new forces that are in opposition to traditional journalism. For example, affordable satellite technology allows the instant transmission of messages. Traditional journalism took time: time to check facts, time (and more than one person) to edit, time to review, time and yet another person to lay out pages. All of these people working together on a project were like-minded, Elliot points out (Wilkins & Christians, 2009, pp. 29–30). Today's new information providers are not all professional journalists and they do not share their common values, says Elliot, who quotes Bermkan and Shumway:

> "[I]t appears that there are two contrasting theories of journalism . . . One consists of established standards and practices that emanate from print and broadcast journalism

and the belief that journalism has a social responsibility to inform citizen and nurture democracy, while the other is informed by suspicion of centrally managed, traditional media conglomerates and a belief, inspired by the open architecture of the Internet and flexibility of Web publishing, that citizens can participate in democracy by creating their own journalism" (quoted in Wilkins & Christians, 2009, p. 30).

Other 21st century phenomenon affecting journalism include the internet itself, which allows instant access to information, as well as an instant podium to anyone who wants to speak, in what Elliot calls a *global town square* (Wilkins & Christians, 2009, p. 29).

The Society of Professional Journalists' Ethics Code

Although journalism, mass communication, and media have changed drastically in the last 20 years, the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics; the code most consulted in the professions of journalism and mass communication, has only been updated once. The Code, which covers both broadcast and print media, as well as new interactive and converged media, was most recently updated in September 2014. The code is made up of four main principles: Seek Truth and Report It, Minimize Harm, Act Independently, and Be Accountable and Transparent. These remained unchanged, besides the fact that "accountability" and "transparency" were combined (SPJ, 2014).

Definition of "Professional Journalist"

Although there has been some discussion in the literature about whether ethics codes should only apply to professional, trained journalists and in fact, can be used to demark the line between the casual blogger and the *New York Times* reporter, the

committee decided that the SPJ ethics code should guide "ethical journalism," not just "journalists" (Seaman, 2014). "The revision committee recognized that journalism is not just the practice of professionals. Many people from all different backgrounds practice journalism" (Seaman, 2014). This sentiment was echoed by committee member and 2015–16 SPJ President Paul Fletcher, who said, "Since 1996, citizen bloggers and online columnists have joined traditional reporters and broadcasters in the marketplace of ideas. The Code is welcoming. Anyone can practice journalism, so long as he or she adheres to ethical principles" (Fletcher, 2016).

Legal vs. Ethical

Another change to the new code was the emphasis that just because a journalist has legal access to obtain and disseminate information does not mean that it is ethical to do so. While some considered the changes extensive, others felt they did not go far enough. The committee recognized that there isn't even a consensus on what an ethics code should include. To account for the next wave of innovation in mass media communication, the committee created an evolving library of position papers, case studies, and perspectives to elaborate on and provide more guidance about specific parts of the Code (Seaman, 2014).

In 2001, Kenneth Starck summarized the research that had been done in journalism ethics and concluded that:

> "An assessment of the literature indicates a great deal of progress has been made, especially in the production of classroom materials, but that scholarship remains

relatively underdeveloped. Large gaps separate the practical from the theoretical, and the realms of the classroom from the newsroom."

Even Starck's extensive review of the literature regarding journalism ethics did not turn up any studies of journalists and ethics codes.

Seek Truth and Report It

As we unpack the SPJ code, we can see some scholarship relating to its components. One example can be found under "Seek Truth and Report It." Although this phrase is simple enough and seems self-evident, there have been discussions of the nature of "truth" for thousands of years. When we speak of truth, we need to be aware of whose truth, and how we make sure that everyone's truth is included.

In a 1998 article, Durham suggests that journalists must make efforts to give a voice to those who don't have one. The mass media bestows a great deal of power to those whose voices are heard, says Durham, who urges the journalist to think past the first, most obvious source, which is usually the person nearest the action. Instead, the journalist should look to whomever is marginalized in the context of the story (1998, p. 136).

Another question to consider is: Who is represented? Linda Steiner points out that to be represented in media signifies social existence, while to be absent means symbolic annihilation. In addition, media images symbolically annihilate women by excluding, trivializing, or demonizing them (Wilkins & Christians, 2009, p. 375). Steiner explains that many feminist concerns can be applied to the practice of journalism. For example,

we should look at who is portrayed as an authority. Gordon, Kitross, Merrill and Reuss point out that the profession is heavily white and male, and sources, who are seen as authorities, are also white and male. Not only is this an inaccurate picture of our world, it is an inaccurate picture of who is important in our world (Gordon et al., 2009, p. 143). Durham puts it this way, "Most scientific accounts, as well as journalistic accounts, are presented from the inside out: Information is collected and interpreted by people who are inside the dominant social order about those who are either inside or outside it . . . (1998, p. 129). Outsiders are rarely a part of a news story and when they are, the very position of being an outsider "delegitimizes their knowledge claims" (Durham, 1998, p. 129).

Finally, journalists need to consider whose concerns or potential responses should be considered when determining what to include in our stories and how we tell them (Wilkins & Christians, 2009, p. 372). To say we are not doing this is disingenuous.

Seek All Sides

The code also calls us to seek all sides of news stories. Sharon L. Braci, in *Exploring Communication Ethics*, says that seeking all sides means more than just adding women, for example, to the mix and stirring. She points out that our whole way of life is often based on the patriarchal assumptions of many classical theories (Arneson, 2007, p. 29.) A careful journalist who is seeking all sides of a news story will be aware of the power structures in play. Every beginning mass communication class discusses gatekeeping and framing. No matter how objective a journalist tries to be, she is subject to the cultural frames that encompass the big stories. "Journalists frequently allow the most skillful media manipulators to impose their dominant frames on the news" (Entman,

1993, p.57). Instead of reporting scattered, unrelated facts from both sides of a debate, the journalist, by challenging a dominant frame or schema, is "better equipped to construct news that makes equally salient – equally accessible to the average, inattentive, and marginally informed audience – two or more interpretations of problems" (1993, p. 57). This, says Entman, will result in more balanced reporting than the "formulaic norm of objectivity (p. 57).

Gross, Katz and Ruby (2003) point out that today's media have a unique opportunity to challenge the balance of power among the world's elite. Foucault's description of the modern panopticon portrays a world where citizens are in a state of permanent visibility through social media, surveillance and media coverage. But Gross calls for the media to turn the surveilling eye of the panopticon on those in power. The many can gather information on the few (p. 106). He quotes John Thompson: "… thanks to the media, it is primarily those who exercise power, rather than those over whom power is exercised, who are subjected to a certain kind of visibility" (1995, as cited in Gross et al., p. 106).

Avoid Undercover News Gathering.

The SPJ code specifically mentions that journalists should avoid undercover news gathering, but this is still a widely accepted practice, especially by investigative journalists at larger, more prestigious organizations.

Lying.

In ethics classes students can discuss when it is acceptable to lie and what is ethical for them, but they don't often look at those who are affected by their deception.

Bok says that when we give them false information, we take away their power and autonomy (1999, p. xvii, 20). Bok points out that lying always gives power to the liar and not to the one being deceived (1999, p. 19). Plato used the word *gennaion* to describe falsehood. The word comes from the sense of noble or well-bred (Bok, 1999, p. 167), and it speaks volumes about the patriarchal attitude of journalists using their power over those whom they are deceiving. Since the journalist is superior to the corrupt government official, for example, she has a right to lie to him. She is the hero in white fighting the villain in black. Being superior, she has a right to tell a lie as long as it is for the greater good. But is this the moral high ground?

Bok gives a 3-pronged test of when it is morally permissible to tell a lie, which could be used when determining if deception is justified. First, is there an alternative? Second, we should look at the moral reasons that might excuse the lie. Finally, we should consider what a group of reasonable people would say about such a lie (1999, pp. 105–106).

Bok uses Kant's categorical imperative in a discussion of so-called "harmless" lies. Looking to Kant's basic philosophy, we can say that when we lie by deceiving our sources, we are always harming ourselves, even it is means we are only harming our own integrity. It also makes it easier to tell more lies in the future, further diminishing our moral growth (Bok, 1999, pp. 32–44, 52). She calls for those who are in professions that require lying to consider how they would respond in those situations. "They could confront hypothetical cases similar to many they will later encounter; articulate and

weigh the reasons supporting the conflicting choices; and debate their strengths and weaknesses" (1999, p. 100).

Investigative Reporting.

Joyce, Saldana, Weiss and Alves (2017) studied the ethics of investigative reporting in Latin America, which they say is entering an era of democracy after 150 years of dictatorships, political coups, and other instability. One of the cornerstones of democracy is a free and responsible press that functions as a watchdog on government. Because of this, the region has seen an increase in investigative journalism, a type of journalism that is fraught with ethical conundrums that call for journalists to weigh the public's right to know with other considerations, such as privacy, using unnamed sources, etc.

The researchers investigated how participants made ethical decisions and whether this varied by region, or even country, and by the type of ethical situation involved. The researchers based their questions on a widely used tool that has been used in previous studies in a variety of countries to assess the acceptability of practices that are considered controversial in journalism. The researchers categorized seven practices as the use of "soft lies". These included pressuring or threatening sources when they did not want to speak, revealing the identity of a source who wished to remain anonymous, paying for information, using private documents without permission, hiding one's identity as a journalist, and using hidden cameras of microphones (Joyce et al., 2017, pp. 467–468).

In all of these cases, the "soft lies" could be justified as a means to the greater end of exposing the truth through journalistic investigation. Joyce, et al., categorized

those who saw soft lies as acceptable as having a utilitarian or consequential bent, while those who deemed the practices "never justifiable," would lean more towards a deontological ethical approach. They based these categories on the fact that "the deontological approach to ethics is based on categorical imperatives of moral values, with strict definitions of right and wrong" (Joyce et al., 2017, p. 476). They found that most respondents could be categorized as having deontological perspectives since a majority of them rejected the use of soft lies in investigative reporting. When it comes to source-related controversial techniques, the journalism community in the region overwhelmingly rejects such practices (Joyce et al., 2017, p. 459). It was also noted that previous studies done outside of Latin America found that journalists tend to use utilitarian ethics, weighing their decisions on what will cause the greatest value with the minimum of harm. However, in Latin America, "a deontological approach is more prevalent" (Joyce al., 2017, p. 476).

Do Not Distort.

Closely related to undercover "lying," is the SPJ admonition not to distort, which can be seen especially in photo manipulation. The reasoning, which Bok points out, behind this is usually that once you lose trust, you can't get it back (1999, pp. 120–121). If the journalist would lie through a distortion, would that same journalist lie about other things in a story? Would that person be unfair and unbiased? Can that person be trusted?

This played out with *National Geographic* when it infamously changed a photograph of the pyramids so they would appear more dramatic. As then-editor Bill Allen points out, if the photographer had walked 50 yards to the left, it would have had

the same effect. Yet, after 20 years Allen still gets asked if he moves pyramids. Allen stated: “This reminds all of us just how fragile our credibility is. If you lose it, it’s almost impossible to ever get it back. It’s why we’re such fanatics about disclosure now at *National Geographic* (as cited in Wheeler, 2016, p. 44).

Wheeler compares photography to a direct quote in journalism:

It is useful to compare assumptions about visual information within the frame of a photograph to assumptions about statements ‘framed’ by quotation marks. Although quote marks suggest that the word appear in print precisely as spoken, in fact quotes are sometimes altered by journalists, even responsible ones (Wheeler, 2016, p. 128).

Depending on what publication they are working for, many journalists believe it is acceptable to change a quote to clean up grammar, edit out profanity, or even clarify a point. Other journalists frown upon this type of change and some publications have ethics codes which forbid it. The SPJ code, however, does not mention anything about direct quotations. It does, however, explicitly mention photo manipulation. Under the section on “Seek Truth and Report It,” the code states: “Never deliberately distort facts or context, including visual information. Clearly label illustrations and reenactments” (SPJ, 2014). Since even professional journalists disagree about the ethics of changing quotes, how can professional photojournalists agree on an acceptable degree of photographic manipulation?

With 21st century technology allowing for the alteration of photos beyond anything that could be done in the darkroom, photojournalists and ethicists are grappling with what is acceptable and what is not. For example, the official rules of the 2001–02

William Randolph Hearst Foundation Journalism Awards Program state that, “Images cannot be digitally altered beyond what is traditionally accepted in the darkroom (Wheeler, 2016, p. 144). While burning, dodging, and even cloning pixels to cover dust spots is considered acceptable, “radical color changes” and “cloning pixels to create a new image or add to an existing image” are not allowed (Wheeler, 2016, p. 144).

Gross, et al.,point out that, recently, photojournalists have been puzzled when “anxious editors begin to treat as criminal the use of what have always been standard photographic resources”(citation). For example, one photographer complained that an editor suddenly objected to the use of blur to indicate motion. Although this device has been used in photography for decades, it is now an unacceptable “manipulation”. Gross et al., opine that the editor has become squeamish because something that used to be unavoidable in film photography has now become possible through photo editing software. “Because it can be avoided, the editor decrees, it should be—as though the alternative, the freeze frame, is realistic in a way that the blurred photograph is not” (Gross et al., 2003, p. 346).

What does all of this mean for the future of photojournalism? Wheeler offers this picture:

> If the future does indeed foster visual journalists of a new breed, will they use technology merely to disseminate the kinds of conventional photographs seen for decades in newspapers and the photorealistic fantasies seen for (200) years in magazines? Or might the processes of photography and the attitudes of its practitioners be reconfigured from the ground up, so as to cultivate something

> altogether new, an even more compelling and meaningful 'eyewitness to history'; If traditional photojournalism dies or is relegated to obscurity, might something better take its place? (2016, p. 199).

Avoid Pandering to Lurid Curiosity.

Among its many caveats, the SPJ code exhorts journalists to "avoid pandering to lurid curiosity". In his book on *Ethics for the New Millennium*, the Dalai Lama agreed that it is part of the nature of journalism to focus on the negative, violence, and aggression. If something is newsworthy, it is usually, by definition, unusual. This is not an accurate reflection of reality, however. "When the media focuses too closely on the negative aspects of human nature, there is a danger that we become persuaded that violence and aggression are its principal characteristics" (Dalai Lama, 2001, pp. 186–87). Because journalists focus on the unusual, they overlook hundreds of acts of kindness done every day. To be ethical, the Dalai Lama said, you need to reflect both sides (2001, pp.186–187).

Be Accountable and Transparent

Under the SPJ ethics code section on accountability and transparency, journalists are called to respond quickly to accusations. J. Marks defines transparency as "a state in which we experience things, ourselves and other people as they really are, in which appearance corresponds with reality" (Wilkins & Christians, 2009, p. 221). Stephanie Craft and Kyle Heim point to a study conducted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1999 that determined most people think journalists are biased, or at least out of touch with their audience. They quoted a speech by Edward Seaton to the Committee of

Concerned Journalists in which he stated, “explaining reasons for our practices will soften a lot of the negative perceptions. We need clear statements, in writing, about what constitutes acceptable journalistic practice . . . And they should be published so readers can understand and evaluate our decisions” (as cited in Wilkins & Christians, 2009, p. 222). Bok points out that we all want the freedom to behave unethically when it benefits us, but we don’t want to be on the receiving end. (1999, p. 23) Following the SPJ code does not allow us to do this.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Ethics Codes

What are the strengths and weaknesses of ethics codes? Gordon et al., point out that they keep us looking at principles that are important. They also help to establish norms for the profession, especially for beginners, like the students in a mass communication ethics class. “Codes can also serve as a starting point—a threshold, if you will—for considering which principles deserve to be honored by ethical practitioners in the mass media” (Gordon et al., 2009, p. 69). In addition, they can give media workers a reference when they are tempted or pressured to violate their own consciences (p. 70). But there are weaknesses as well. The first thing to keep in mind is that ethics codes are guidelines, not laws, and many are not enforced. A journalist may be fired for not following an ethics code, but she won’t be fined or jailed. Gordon et al.,point out that ethics codes usually include the lowest acceptable standards, while at the same time aren’t always attainable. This may be because they are fuzzy, imprecise, and use the kind of language editors would not allow of their own staff. They add that codes can’t ensure quality reporting and are often more show than substance (p. 68). “There is concern that

the codes of ethics are more show than substance, that their major role is to give the public the impression that the media and the men and women who work for them have high standards of professionalism (p. 68).

In an article in *Quill*, a trade magazine for professional journalists, David Cuillier points out some other caveats regarding the use of ethics codes. He compared them to "roadmaps for reaching an ethically sound destination. The real work is behind the wheel" (Cuillier, 2014). The 2013–14 SPJ president and director of the University of Arizona School of Journalism said:

> Codes are useful, but they also can distract us from core principles that have guided humans for thousands of years. At their worst, codes, if used simplistically and without thought, can be crutches — a way for someone to cherry pick a line to justify a gut call. Want to publish a photo of a dead child? Then choose 'Seek truth and report it.' Want to avoid publishing the photo? Then choose 'Minimize harm.' Codes are just starting points for deeper discussion (Cuillier, 2014).

How Journalists Use Ethics Codes

Despite the fact that there is an entire journal dedicated to studying ethics in journalism, very little research can be found on how journalists use ethics codes in their decision-making processes. For example, in 1989 Pritchard found no evidence that ethics codes directly influence the decisions of journalists, but when Boeyink looked at the issue in 1994, he found evidence that ethics codes do affect the behavior of journalists. Many other aspects of journalism ethics, especially related to the way journalists interact with the public, have been undertaken in the last 20 years, but there is a dearth of information

on the use of ethics codes in the professional newsroom. Coleman and Wilkins (2004) found that journalists fall high on the scale of moral development when compared with other professions. The researchers concluded that "giving journalists the opportunity to work through more ethical dilemmas, whether they are real, occurring on the job, or hypothetical in seminars and workshops, bodes well for the profession" (Coleman & Willkins, p. 521). This is exactly the type of exposure that could be done in journalism/mass communication ethics courses and would be especially useful to student journalists practicing the profession while in school.

Applied Ethics of Journalism/Mass Communication

Truth and Objectivity

Notions of objectivity have changed significantly over the last few decades, but ethics codes still reflect a call to be objective. The SPJ code, for example, does not have the word *objectivity* in it, but several of its caveats reflect the traditional journalism call for objectivity. For example: "Diligently seek subjects of news coverage to allow them to respond to criticism or allegations of wrongdoing," "Give voice to the voiceless," "Support the open and civil exchange of views, even views they find repugnant," and "Boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience" (SPJ, 2014). However, postmodern thinkers do not see the world as an objective place. Merril and Odel summarize modern objections to objectivity: we are all products of a particular culture and have cultural biases; we all understand reality differently because we have different perspectives and our believes have been shaped by peers, parents, and teachers (1983, p. 103).

While science and technology have provided order and reason to nature, the postmodern individual no longer has confidence in absolute reality (Leslie, 2007, p. 12). "Reality may not be orderly at all, and even if it is, we may not be able to grasp it," writes Larry Leslie in a 2007 ethics textbook for journalists (p. 12).

Yet, many, including Stephen Ward, claim that we do not need to abandon objectivity altogether. "The decline of objectivity has left a vacuum in ethics just as journalism undergoes rapid, disorienting change," he said (Wilkins & Christians, 2009, p. 77) .Ward believes that the pushback against the yellow journalism excesses in the late 1800s led to a deeply flawed belief that objectivity means reporting just the facts, and that reporting can be as empirical as any scientific undertaking. The journalist was perceived to be a scientific instrument passively observing and transmitting facts. He calls for a change to what he labels *pragmatic objectivity* which is neither a "detached objective journalism" or a "caring, attached journalism"; but having values and commitments (Wilkins & Christians, 2009, p. 77).

> The best journalism is a judicious blend of the romantic and objective impulses. The romantic impulse is a passion for interesting, substantial interpretations. The objective impulse is a passion of justified interpretations. Romantic and objective impulses should work together to produce engaging and objectively tested journalism. Journalism based only on passion is reckless; a journalism based only on objectivity is accurate but lacks depth" (Wilkins & Christians, 2009, p. 80).

Definitions of Truth.

Instead of looking for an objective truth, postmodern scholars believe that reality is shifting and unknowable. Several scholars have looked at the definition of truth as it pertains to journalism. Hearns-Branaman and Owens (2018) offers four types of truth. The first is realism, which claims that reality exists and can be accessed and communicated through media, which are a mirror of the "real" world. The next view is pragmatism, which believes that to arrive at the truth you need diverse opinions and points of view. This means that those covering the news need to be diverse as well. The view of truth as antirealism posits that one can never arrive at truth because of interference from language, politics, culture, etc. Hearns-Branaman writes, "How can you continue to write real stories about politics when you know the 'facts' are being manipulated and you might be misleading the audience more than helping them?" (2018, p. 108). Baudrillard espouses a view of truth that has been labeled "hyperrealism". The news is more than real, it is hyperreal; constructed through rituals, strategies and codes (Hearns-Branaman & Owen, 2018, p. 112). Is the incident a civil war or a revolution? Is it terrorism or patriotism? Without the media, there would be no terrorism, Hearns-Branaman points out. "While a tree falling in the woods would still make a sound even if no one were there to hear it, a terrorist attack would never take place if no one were there to film it" (2018, p. 128).

In their 1983 book on the philosophy of journalism, Merril and Odell offer a different paradigm of journalism and truth. Transcendental truth is that truth which is beyond human knowledge, and therefore cannot be accessed by the journalist. What can be accessed is potential truth: what is available to the human mind, what can be known

and reported. From that, there is selected truth: the raw material the journalist uses to construct a story. That truth leads to reported truth, or the part of the selected truth that is used in the story and presented by the journalist. Finally, Merril and Odell consider the audience when they describe perceived truth, or, how the audience receives the story (1983, pp. 172–174). "Regardless of what the reporter may have felt to be the truth of a story, the real truth in the story is what each individual reader concludes or perceives to be the truth of the story" (Merril & Odell, 1983, p. 174).

Nature of Photography and Manipulation of Photos

An area of journalism ethics that comes up often in scholarship is the nature of photography as it relates to truth, and from there, the morality of manipulating photos. Julianne Newton explains that a photograph affects both the conscious and nonconscious parts of the brain. The body, she says, has evolved to believe what the eyes see. Light is translated into electrical signals that speed along the optic nerve to the thalamus. From there a very rough concept of what we've seen is sent to the amygdala, the "fight or flight" part of the brain. It isn't until the visual cortex becomes involved that conscious processing takes place in detail. So, we react first primevally and then we process what we have seen consciously (as cited in Wilkins & Christians, 2009, p. 86).

Newton points out that because a photograph records visual information, it is seen as neutral, a mechanical entity, not something that is subjective. In fact, photographers were originally seen as recorders, not reporters (Newton, 2013, p. 6), although that is changing. Film photography captures an image when a ray of light passes through a lens and leaves a mark on paper, but in digital photography the point of light is translated into

a digital code. Because of this conversion, people perceive digital photography as less trustworthy (Newton, 2013, p. 6). On the other hand, visual perception theory states that even if we know something can't be true, or we've been told it is not true, we tend to believe what we see (Newton, 2013, p. 27).

Many scholars agree that photography is not objective. In her book, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, photographer Susan Sontag says there is an unbridgeable difference between getting an image through media and being there. The photojournalist is trying to get us to see what she sees, but the distance is too great (2017, as cited in Arneson, 2007, p. 25). Newton points out that the meaning of the photograph depends on the viewer. Newton gives the example of a photograph of a student protestor standing in front of a tank in Tiananmen Square. In the West this photograph carried the meaning of a courageous individual standing firm before the armed might of a government that was against its own people. In China, it represented the restraint of troops when a man was blocking the march of a line of tanks (Newton, 2013, p. 25).

So why is it that we will accept manipulation in a photograph that is labeled an "illustration" or in art? Newton explains that the artist is often trying to express concepts that cannot be seen or felt physically. We expect journalistic images to be a duplication of the real world (Wilkins & Christians, 2009, p. 88). When they are not, we feel misled, even duped.

Grabber (1990), and Newhagen and Reeves (1992) determined that news images, especially of novel, unusual, disturbing, or negative events and situations, are more memorable than other kinds of news and images (as cited in Gross et al., 2003, p. 2). One

example that was explored in depth was corpse photos (Gross et al., 2003, pg. 57). According to Gross et al., journalists have unspoken ethical standards that these are rarely newsworthy because they are so powerful that they can "ambush" a defenseless viewer. They are often used to make a point about a controversial or neglected topic. Even when they are shown, they are often photos of non-Americans or “Others” (2003, p. 65-66). Newton (2013, p. 121) discussed a famous photograph of an incinerated Iraqi soldier. Such photographs are often used in ethics courses as case studies of invasion of privacy in photography. The body itself shows a human form transfixed at the moment of death. The image was taken as reportage, Newton said, but humans also made it art. This was a violation, she claims.

> The violation? The killing was a violation. Taking the picture was a violation. The publication and exhibition were violations. We furthered the violation by staring at the image and by objectifying it in lectures and essays. Yet the picture preserves, helps us remember the value of a human life - and in so doing the picture sanctifies (2013, p. 121).

Promise Keeping

Journalists are often expected to make and keep promises. According to Kagan, promises provide reliable reassurance that something I am counting on you to do will be done. For example, I may need you to help me achieve a goal that I cannot reach on my own. If I believe you will do your part, it makes sense for me to go ahead and put in the effort of doing my part, but if you do not complete your part of the task, my efforts will be wasted, as the goal cannot be achieved on my own.

> "What is needed is a way that the other person can reliably reassure me that she will indeed perform the act in question. While a mere assertion may be given, it may not be enough to assure me that it will, indeed, be completed… Luckily, the practice of promising provides a way out of this impasse (Kagan, 1998, pp. 116–117).

This notion of keeping promises is especially relevant to journalists who often promise sources anonymity. In fact, one area of ethics that journalists often face is whether to give up the name of a source when they are subpoenaed to do so. Do they keep their promise and go to jail? Or is it acceptable to break a promise under those circumstances? Also, journalists make certain "promises" to their audiences ranging from telling the truth and being accurate to not plagiarizing or fabricating stories.

Obligations As Journalists

Journalists, for many reasons, are in a role that puts them under special obligations to society. "Unlike general obligations which . . . everyone owes equally to everyone else, these special obligations are owed only by certain specific individuals to certain other specific individuals" (Kagan, 1998, p. 126). Because the First Amendment is so highly valued in our country, the Supreme Court has ruled over and over that free speech outweighs many other factors. Since journalists have a special role to play as watchdogs over the government, they have specific obligations; such as telling both sides of a story, that are spelled out in professional codes. For example, the SPJ code states, "Recognize a special obligation to serve as watchdogs over public affairs and government," as well as, "Diligently seek subjects of news coverage to allow them to

respond to criticism or allegations of wrongdoing" along with "Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable. Give voice to the voiceless," and "Support the open and civil exchange of views, even views they find repugnant" (SPJ, 2014).

Research into Mass Media Students' Ethics

The importance of exposing students to ethics early in their academic careers was shown in a 2004 study by Coleman and Wilkins. They gathered baseline data on the moral development of 249 professional journalists when compared to other professions using the Defining Issues Test, an instrument used to operationally define moral development, that has been given to hundreds of populations. The researchers found that journalists fall high on the scale of moral development when compared with other professions. "In this and three other studies, professional journalists consistently scored higher than adults in general and several professional groups . . ." (Coleman & Wilkins, 2004, p. 521). The researchers concluded that "giving journalists the opportunity to work through more ethical dilemmas, whether they are real, occurring on the job, or hypothetical in seminars and workshops, bodes well for the profession" (Coleman & Willkins, 2004, p. 521). This is exactly the type of exposure that could be done in journalism/mass communication ethics courses and would be especially useful to student journalists practicing the profession while in school. An important point noted by the researchers is that such self-reports do not necessarily indicate what participants would do when faced with an actual ethical situation and "moral judgment is statistically

associated with many different measures of behavior, but the correlations are not strong" (Coleman & Willkins, 2004, p. 522).

In 2007, Reinardy and Moore conducted online, descriptive surveys of introductory and graduating journalism students at one large university (*n*=212) and found that, in keeping with moral development theory, ethical decision making changed from freshman to senior year. "Practical experiences of internships and course lab work provide graduating students a more complex approach to ethical decision making and generate alternative viewpoints that go beyond ethical codes" (Reinardy & Moore, 2007, p. 161). The results of this survey indicate that, since student journalists are necessarily less experienced than their professional counterparts, it is even more important that they be given the concrete guidelines of ethics codes to use in making decisions in the real life situations they encounter on student media.

Students' Use of Ethics Codes

In 1989, student journalist interns were surveyed regarding their use of ethics codes. They were asked specific questions about ethics in their work at student newspapers and ethics on the job as interns. The instrument used in this study was a modification of the American Society of Newspaper Editors audit questionnaire. Calling the study a "quick and dirty snapshot" Fry noted that the sample was not representative of the population in general and called for "some journalism researcher" to undertake a more scientific and comprehensive survey of student journalists (Fry, 1989, p. 191). Fry noted that, although 71% of the students surveyed received their ethical training on the student newspapers, they were required to function as professional journalists

immediately, even when writing their first stories, which was usually before they had received any training in ethics, especially pertaining to the practice of journalism. Fry pointed out that these unseasoned journalists had "the full potential for damaging their subjects, themselves, their papers, their schools and our profession" (Fry, 1989, p. 192). In a similar study conducted around the same time by Kostyu, 359 student journalists, all of whom had some exposure to university journalism programs, returned surveys about their responses to 25 hypothetical ethical situations. "Results indicate that although respondents found most of the hypothetical situations to be ethics violations, they often did not recognize the seriousness of the violations and did not know what to do when faced with those violations" (Kostyu, 1990). Kostyu pointed out that because journalists usually have to make ethical decisions "in the rush of events," they do not have time to reflect, but make decisions based on reflexes. This means that journalists ideally would do the deliberation before they are confronted with the actual situation, preferably when they are still in journalism school. While Kostyu did not survey students who specifically worked on student media, the study brings up two important points that could apply to student journalists. First, respondents did not consider many of the more serious ethical situations to be very serious, and secondly, they did not know what to do when faced with these violations (Kostyu, 1990, p. 49). "Our results illustrate that students are asking for guidance" (Kostyu, 1990, p. 54).

While there has not been much in the way of research comparing students with professional journalists, in 2002, Gary Hanson investigated the disconnect between television news directors (n=60) and journalism students (n= 166) when it comes to

perceptions of media ethics. Hanson (2002) found that students anticipated facing more ethical concerns thannews directors said they had actually encountered. In addition, 93% of the students expected to face source/reporter conflicts; a topic that is hotly debated in journalism ethics courses, but only 28% of the news directors said they had actually faced these conflicts on the job. In addition, 93% of the students thought they would encounter conflicts of interest on the job, while only 49% of the news directors indicated that they had faced them (Hanson, 2002, p. 241). Finally, the results of the third question indicated that students were more concerned with business pressures and the need to boost viewership than the news directors were (Hanson, 2002, p. 242). In conclusion, Hanson stated:

> "The data suggest that the classroom and workplace are somewhat out of sync on the specific topics that should be emphasized in an ethics course . . . In spite of journalism schools' efforts to acculturate these students, the students may still be thinking more like the general audience than like journalists. The data also provide some insight into the low level of exposure to ethical decision making that interns and college-age media employees receive while on the job" (Hanson, 2002, p. 245).

In 2010, Hardin and Hettinga explored how classroom experiences and ethical codes affect the decision-making of students who worked at 109 college daily newspapers in the United States. The researchers found that students may see journalistic ethical codes as something to hang on the wall of the newsroom, but not something to actually be consulted when making decisions in the heat of the moment. "Students

frequently indicated that their publications had adopted the SPJ code . . . But they were typically unable to identify a specific instance where they had consulted the code while making a decision" (Hardin & Hettinga, 2010). The researchers found that ethics courses were more influential than codes when it came to making decisions, although less than half of the students reported taking a media ethics class.

Research Hypotheses

After an extensive review of the literature on ethics, ethics pedagogy, and applied ethics of mass communication, the following research hypotheses were formed:

- H1 On measures pertaining to unambiguous ethical violations, students who received formal training in mass communication and/or general ethics will estimate significantly higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct than will students who had not completed an ethics class.
- H2 On measures pertaining to unambiguous ethical violations, students who are familiar with the SPJ Code of Ethics will estimate significantly higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct than students who are not familiar with the Code.
- H3 On measures pertaining to unambiguous ethical violations, students who have been in school longer will estimate significantly higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct.
- H4a On measures pertaining to unambiguous ethical violations, students who score higher on how important religion is to their lives will estimate significantly higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct than will students who score lower on how important religion is to their lives.

- H4b On measures pertaining to unambiguous ethical violations, students who attend religious services more often will estimate significantly higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct than will students who attend religious services less often.

In addition to these hypotheses, the following research question was generated:

- RQ1 To what extent do (a) level of education, (b) completion of an ethics course, (c) familiarity with the SPS Code of Ethics, (d) religious importance, and (e) church attendance associate with attitudes toward additional ethics situations?

Methods

Participants

A convenience sample of student journalists was used for this study, as the research did not seek to generalize responses to a larger population, but to provide an initial investigation into the attitudes of student journalists. To develop a convenience sample, the author consulted the Associated Collegiate Press (ACP), an organization with more than 650 member publications. The author requested and received a membership list from the ACP that contained 602 active member organizations (a number of them duplicates). Individuals in charge of member media outlets received an invitation to complete a survey and share the invitation with students. To enhance the sample, the author also sent a survey invitation to members of the College Media Association Listserv. The organization serves student media professionals and staffs, and has more than 700 members, many the same as those in ACP. Individuals received instructions to complete a questionnaire only once.

The author collected 221 responses and deleted seven who clearly were not student journalists. These responses were provided in a survey question about what media type the respondent worked for. If someone chose one of the student media categories offered, he/she was retained in the survey. However, there was an "Other" category and some responses were clearly not student journalists; one respondent was an adviser, another answered, "landscape artist," and another said he/she was camera operator for a media team. With seven respondents eliminated from the study, analyses included responses from 214 student journalists.

Materials

The survey instrument was created in line with a questionnaire created by Paul Kostyu (1990). Kostyu created his survey based on a study by the American Society of Newspaper Editors' (ASNE) ethics committee. Kostyu surveyed 359 students from Bowling Green State University. The instrument included students taking their first journalism class to those getting ready to graduate. He provided students with 25 hypothetical ethical situations which were based in part on the ASNE surveys. Of Kostyu's (1990) 25 questions, six were duplicated in statement form for the current study. With response options including "very unethical," "slightly unethical," "moderately ethical," and "very ethical," the six statements included:

- "Reporter makes campaign contribution to official he writes about regularly."
- "Reporter receives reduced rate from company he/she covers on a regular basis."
- "Reporter accepts free trip and that fact is included in story."
- "Reporter rewrites story from competitor without verifying information."
- "Reporter ["and family" was removed] spends occasional social evening with person about whom he/she makes news judgments regularly."
- "Reporter uses false identity to obtain information."

Kostyu's (1990) question about freelancing was slightly modified. In Kostyu's survey, the question stated, "Photographer shoots freelance photos for company he might photograph for newspaper." This was changed to:

• "Reporter shoots freelance photos (and is paid for them) from an organization he/she covers regularly."

Another question that was slightly modified was "Reporter reveals to an interested party sensitive information from a story before it is published." This was changed to:

• "Reporter shows a source a story before it is published."

Kostyu's question about a reporter receiving a free trip stated, "Reporter receives free trip sponsored by company or government agency." This was revised to state:

• "Reporter writes a travel story and receives free lodging from a resort mentioned in the story; reporter does not reveal that he/she received free lodging."

Kostyu's survey did not include questions that stem from advances in technology over the past few decades, especially the arrival and ubiquity of the Internet and the revolution in photo editing capabilities. The following questions were added to the survey:

- "Photographer edits a feature photo to remove skin imperfections."
- "Information from a website is used in a story without attribution."
- "Photographer edits a sports photo to add in a ball that was really there, but not present the exact second the photo was taken."

Kostyu's survey also did not cover several ethical scenarios that reporters often encounter. These items included:

- "Reporter is a member of a club or organization that he/she writes about regularly."

- "Reporter uses an anonymous source."
- "Reporter presents images or sounds that are re-enacted without informing the public."
- "Reporter uses hidden cameras or microphones."
- "Reporter allows a source access to questions before an interview."
- "Reporter takes money from a source to print a story; does not label it as paid advertisement."
- "Reporter changes direct quotes to correct a source's grammar."

Finally, three questions were added regarding situations that most journalists would consider ethical in most situations. These questions were included so that respondents would not automatically assume that every situation was unethical. These were:

- "Reporter confirms facts in a story with a source before the story is published."
- "Reporter asks 'pre-interview' or 'warm-up' questions off the record."
- "Reporter edits profanity out of a direct quote."

The survey instrument also contained several questions about ethics pedagogy and education. These included the following:

- "Have you taken an academic ethics course?" Responses included: "Yes, journalism or mass communication ethics," "Yes, general ethics," "Both of the above," "No," and "Other."

- "Have you had any ethics training as a member of student media?" Responses included: "Yes, an ethics workshop, lecture or similar formal activity as part of student media training," "No," and "Other."
- "How often have you had informal ethics discussion in your work on student media (not a formal ethics course)?" Likert responses included: "Frequently," "Occasionally," "Rarely," and "Never."
- "How often have you encountered a situation where you had to make an ethical decision on student media?" Responses included: "Frequently," "Occasionally," "Rarely," and "Never."

Questions about the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics included:

- "How familiar are you with the Society of Professional Journalist's Code of Ethics?" Responses included: "Very familiar," "Somewhat familiar," "A little familiar," and "Not at all familiar."
- "How often have you used the SPJ Code of Ethics when making ethical decisions on student media?" Responses included: "Frequently," "Occasionally, "Rarely," and "Never."

Questions about religion were taken from a Pew Research study on Belief in God (Pew, 2015). These questions included:

- "Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?" Response options included: "More than once a week," "Once a week," "Once or twice a month," "A few times a year" and "Never."

- "How important is religion in your life"? Responses included: "Very important," "Somewhat important," "Not too important," and "Not at all important."
- "Are you personally a member of a local synagogue, mosque, temple, church or other house of worship?" Responses included "Yes" and "No."

The following demographic questions were also included:

- "What is your gender?" Response options included "Male," "Female," "Nonbinary," and "Other."
- "What year are you in school?" Responses included: "1," "2," "3," "4," and "More than 4."
- "I work for a (choose all that apply)." Response choices included: "TV station," "radio station," "newspaper," "website," "yearbook," and "Other."
- "I am a/an (choose all that apply)." Responses included: "Editor-In-Chief/ Station Manager," "Editor/Producer," "Writer/Announcer," and "Other."
- "What state is your school located in?" Respondents were asked to write in their answers.
- "What is the size of your school?" Response options included: "Less than 5,000," "5,000-10,000," "10,001-20,000," "More than 20,000," and "Don't Know."
- "Please choose which best describes your school (choose all that apply)." Responses included: "Public (state)," "Private," "2-year, "4-year," and "Affiliated with a religion."

A copy of the survey instrument can be found in Appendix A.

The survey instrument was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Clemson University for exempt status. That status was granted in the summer of 2019.

Procedure

Once the survey instrument was completed and approved, the author tested it with 20 colleagues teaching mass communication and 20 former student journalists from a small, private school in a Southeastern state. Responses were clustered around the middle of the Likert scales with a couple of questions showing little variance in answers. This was to be expected, since some of the ethical situations presented to respondents were clearly, highly unethical (getting paid to publish a story) or highly ethical (confirming facts with a source). It should also be noted that the pre-test sample contained seasoned practitioners and the actual survey would include students who had never taken a journalism class or had any exposure to ethics education. The testing sample was much more knowledgeable about ethics than the average survey respondent would be. This meant that they knew which situations were ethical, questionable, or unethical, and answered accordingly. It was not expected that those on the ACP list would have the same knowledge base.

The author sent a survey invitation to the ACP list on September 16, 2019, and the CMA Listserv at the end of September. Participants were given a link to a survey created with Google Forms. The link was entitled, “Acceptability of Journalistic Practices.” The author used the phrase “practices” rather than “ethics” to preclude any

bias on the part of recipients towards an "ethics survey." Responses were collected for about four weeks and the survey was closed on October 20, 2019.

The following should also be noted: For the question about type of school, respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer, and several chose both public and private. Those responses were eliminated for correlations about the type of school only. The responses were kept for all of the other questions. When reporting what region of the United States our respondents came from the author used the regions on the U.S Census website (U.S. Census Bureau).

Statistical Analyses

The author first analyzed responses descriptively, focusing on frequency counts for nominal and ordinal measures, and measures of central tendency for interval-level variables. The study included Likert statements about nine unambiguously unethical behaviors, and these nine items were developed into a 36-point index (M = 11.70, SD = 2.98). Reliability of the index was acceptable at .70, and the index was used as a dependent variable in statistical analyses. Before using ordinary lest squares regression to test the influence of multiple predictor variables on the index response measure, the study used Pearson product moment correlation coefficients to measure associations among variables.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Gender

In this study, 144 (67%) of students (n =213) were female and 32 % (66) were male. Three students (1%) chose “non-binary” and no students selected “Other.”

Type of School, Level of Education

Students were asked what type of school they went to and were given the following options: public, private, two-year, four-year, and religious. Since all the options were in one question and students were allowed to choose more than one response, percentages do not add up to 100. Respondents came from a cross section of school sizes and types (n = 214) with 33% (127) coming from four-year schools and 1% (four) coming from two-year schools. Thirty-two percent (122) came from public schools and 20% (76) from private schools. Some 14% (53) of respondents came from schools affiliated with a religion. When it comes to size of schools, 32% (68) of respondents came from schools with less than 5,000 enrollment and 19% (40) came from schools with 5,000 to 10,000 enrollment. A total of 14 % (31) came from schools with 10,000-20,000 enrollment and 28% (59) came from schools with more than 20,000 enrollment, while 7% of respondents (15) said they did not know the size of their school.

Of those surveyed, 10% (23) were in their first year of school, 22% (48) were second year students, 37% (80) were in their third year, 21% (45) were fourth year students, and 8% (17) said they had more than four years of school.

Geographic Region

In this study, 97 (46%) of 213 responses came from students in the Southern region of the United States. These included 34 in South Carolina, 21 in Louisiana, nine in Florida, nine in North Carolina, six in Texas, five in Alabama, five in Georgia, four in Arkansas, one in Kentucky, one in Mississippi, one in Virginia, and one in Oklahoma. Fifty-nine (28%) were from the Midwest. This included 27 from Iowa, eight from Illinois, eight from Indiana, five from Missouri, four from Minnesota, three from Kansas, two from North Dakota, and two from Michigan. Another 17% (38) were from the Western United States. These included 14 from California, 11 from Washington, nine from Utah, two from Idaho, one from Colorado, and one from Arizona. Seventeen students (8%) were from the Northeast, including 15 from Pennsylvania, one from New Jersey and one from Rhode Island. Two students (0.9 %) from Alberta, Canada, also responded to the survey and their answers were included in the results. While mass media law is different in Canada and the United States, ethics is more universal, especially as both countries are in North America and stem from a western, European tradition.

Student Media

The respondents included students working on a wide range of collegiate media. Students were asked what student medium or media they worked for and were allowed to choose more than one answer to this question, so the percentages do not add up to 100. In addition, some respondents left this question blank. Some 165 respondents or 80% (n=207) said they worked for a newspaper, with 35% saying they worked for websites. Broadcast media included 17% working for a television station and 8% working in radio.

Seven percent of respondents said they worked for a yearbook and 10% chose "Other." Of these, eight, or 4%, said they worked for magazines. The roles they filled on student media also ranged from top editors and managers to content producers. Students were allowed to choose more than one response, and some did not respond at all, so percentages do not add up to 100. Twenty percent, or 42 respondents (n = 206), were editors -in-chief or managers, 45% (93) were editors or producers, 57% (118) were writers or announcers, and 16% identified as "Other," which included advisers as well as those clearly not involved with student media. However, of the people responding with "Other," four (2%) identified themselves as graphic artists and 11 (5%) as photographers, so they were included in the results. Those who wrote "advisor," or any other job that was clearly not in student media (landscaper, for example), were eliminated from the survey results so as to keep it strictly confined to student media workers.

Completion of Ethics Course, Familiarity with, and Use of, the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics

Students were asked if they had taken an academic ethics course and given four options in their responses. Of those responding, 29% (63) answered, "Yes, a journalism or mass communication ethics course," 8% (18) chose "Yes, general ethics," and an additional 4% (7) said they had taken both. Some 58% (124) said they had not taken an ethics course. This variable was ultimately collapsed to indicate whether or not students had completed at least one ethics course.

Students were also asked about their familiarity with the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics. Of 213 respondents, 68 (31.9%) said they were "Very

familiar," 47 (22%) indicated "Somewhat familiar," 56 (26.3%) said "A little familiar," and 42 (19.7%) indicated "Not at all familiar." Students were then asked how frequently they used the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics when making ethical decisions on student media. Of 214 students responding, 37 (17.3%) said they used the Code "Frequently," 53 (24.8%) said they used it "Occasionally," 46 (21.5%) said "Rarely," and 78 (36.4%) said "Never."

Religious Measures

Students were asked three questions used in the Pew Research study on Belief in God (Pew). The first question was, "Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?" Eighteen percent (36) of respondents said they attended more than once a week, 16% (36) said they attended once a week, and 10% (22) said they attended once or twice a month. Another 21% (46) said they attended religious services a few times each year and 35% (74) said they never attended religious services. The second question asked, "How important is religion in your life?" Thirty-seven percent (77) of respondents said, "Very important," 17% (37) said "Somewhat important," 13% (28) said "Not so important," and 32% (67) said "Not at all important." The third question was, "Are you personally a member of a local synagogue, mosque, temple, church or other house of worship?" Thirty-eight percent (80) said "Yes" and 62% (134) said "No."

Ethics Measure.

The main section of the survey contained 22 ethical situations. Respondents were given response choices using a Likert scale; these included "Very unethical," "Slightly

unethical," "Moderately ethical," and "Very ethical." Table 1 contains all 22 ethical situations and their descriptive data.

Table 1

Answers to questions about ethical situations - descriptive

Question	Very Unethical		Slightly Unethical		Mod. Ethical		Very Ethical		mean	median	mode	sd
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%				
Reporter is a member of a club or organization that he/she writes about regularly.	91	42	81	38	27	13	15	7	1.84	2	1	0.9
Reporter makes campaign contribution to official he/she writes about regularly.	124	58	54	25	26	12	9	4	1.62	1	1	0.858
Photographer edits a feature photo to remove skin imperfections.	46	21	100	47	58	27	10	5	2.15	2	2	0.808
Reporter receives reduced rate from company/organization he/she covers on a regular basis.	125	58	67	31	20	9	1	0.5	1.52	1	1	0.684
Reporter rewrites story from competitor without verifying information.	186	87	24	11	2	0.9	2	0.9	1.16	1	1	0.458
Information from a website is used in a story without attribution.	165	77	45	21	3	1.4	1	0.5	1.25	1	1	0.496
Reporter shows a source a story before it is published.	69	32	86	40	37	17	22	10	2.06	2	2	0.953
Reporter confirms facts in a story with a source before the story is published.	11	0.5	7	3	13	6	183	85	3.72	4	4	0.76
Reporter spends occasional social evenings with a person he/she writes about regularly.	39	18	103	48	62	29	10	5	2.2	2	2	0.788

Reporter uses false identity to obtain information.	115	54	75	35	22	10	2	0.9	1.58	1	1	0.712
Reporter writes a travel story and receives free lodging from a resort mentioned in the story; reporter does not reveal that he/she received free lodging.	123	57	55	26	31	14	5	2	1.62	1	1	0.818
Reporter accepts free trip and that fact is included in story.	20	9	46	21	72	34	76	36	2.95	3	4	0.973
Reporter shoots freelance photos (and is paid for them) from an organization he/she covers regularly.	36	17	69	32	71	33	38	18	2.52	3	3	0.972
Reporter uses an anonymous source.	12	6	33	15	114	53	55	26	2.99	3	3	0.799
Reporter presents images or sounds that are re-enacted without informing the public.	104	49	84	39	22	10	3	1	1.64	2	1	0.723
Reporter uses hidden cameras or microphones.	101	47	84	39	27	13	2	0.9	1.67	2	1	0.729
Reporter asks “pre-interview” or “warm-up” questions off the record.	15	7	39	18	99	46	61	29	2.96	3	3	0.866
Reporter edits profanity out of a direct quote.	16	7	54	25	96	45	48	22	2.82	3	3	0.865
Photographer edits a sports photo to add in a ball that was really there, but not present the exact second the photo was taken.	72	34	78	36	48	22	16	7	2.04	2	2	0.929

Reporter allows a source access to questions before an interview.	48	22	67	31	74	35	25	12	2.36	2	3	0.957
Reporter changes direct quotes to correct a source's grammar.	22	10	81	38	83	39	28	13	2.55	3	3	0.848
Reporter takes money from a source to print a story; does not label it as paid advertisement.	188	88	22	10	3	1	1	0	1.14	1	1	0.425

Unambiguous Ethics Violations

The survey contained nine situations that unambiguously violated the SPJ Code of Ethics. The questions included three which addressed conflicts of interest. The SPJ Code focuses on this in the third section, "Act Independently," when it states, "Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived. Disclose unavoidable conflicts" (SPJ, 2014). The questions included the following:

- "Reporter is a member of a club or organization that he/she writes about regularly." With one being "Very unethical" and four being "Very ethical" on a Likert scale, some 80% of the respondents considered this situation "Very unethical" or "Slightly unethical." About a fourth of respondents found it "Very ethical" or "Moderately ethical."
- "Reporter makes campaign contribution to official he/she writes about regularly." More than half the respondents found this situation unethical, with 83% labeling it "Very unethical" or "Slightly unethical." On the other end of the scale, less than 20% found it to be "Very ethical" or "Moderately ethical."

- "Reporter receives reduced rate from company/organization he/she covers on a regular basis." Only one respondent found this situation "Very ethical." More than 90% found it "Slightly unethical" or "Very unethical."

Respondents were asked two questions about being reimbursed for writing a travel story, but only one of them unambiguously violated the SPJ Code. The question was as follows, "Reporter writes a travel story and receives free lodging from a resort mentioned in the story; reporter does not reveal that he/she received free lodging." This is specifically mentioned in the Code when it states, "Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and avoid political and other outside activities that may compromise integrity or impartiality, or may damage credibility" (SPJ, 2014). Most respondents found this unethical, with 83% responding "Very unethical" or "Slightly unethical." A small number of respondents found it "Very ethical" or "Moderately ethical."

The issue of plagiarism was dealt with in two questions on the survey and is unequivocally forbidden by the SPJ Code, which states, "Never plagiarize. Always attribute" (SPJ, 2014). The specific questions on the survey included the following:

- "Reporter rewrites story from competitor without verifying information." For this question, almost all respondents labeled this situation as unethical, with a very small number calling it ethical.
- "Information from a website is used in a story without attribution." Again, 2% of respondents found this situation to be "Very ethical" or "Moderately ethical," while 98% found it "Very unethical" or "Slightly unethical."

Two questions were about illustrations and reenactments. The SPJ Code addresses this when it states, “Never deliberately distort facts or context, including visual information. Clearly label illustrations and re-enactments” (SPJ, 2014). Reenactment was mentioned specifically in this question: “Reporter presents images or sounds that are re-enacted without informing the public.” The distortion of visual information was addressed in this question: “Photographer edits a sports photo to add in a ball that was really there, but not present the exact second the photo was taken.” For the re-enactment question, a majority of respondents found it at least “Slightly unethical.” The question about editing a photo to add a ball resulted in a greater spread of responses with slightly more than a third finding it “Very unethical,” another third finding it “Slightly unethical,” and less than a third finding it “Moderately ethical” or “Very ethical.”

Finally, students were asked to respond to the following question: “Reporter takes money from a source to print a story; does not label it as paid advertisement.” Some 98% of respondents found this at least “Slightly unethical.”

Prior Review

The ASNE/SPJ survey of professionals included some situations regarding prior review that generally are considered unethical in the profession, even though they are not covered in the SPJ Code of ethics. The following scenarios fall into this category:

- “Reporter allows a source access to questions before an interview.” While a majority of respondents found this “Slightly” or “Very” unethical, 47% found it to be “Moderately or “Very” ethical.

- "Reporter shows a source a story before it is published." A majority of respondents found this either "Slightly" or "Very" unethical. A little less than a third found it "Very ethical" or "Moderately ethical."

Surreptitious Methods. The following questions on undercover or surreptitious methods of reporting are considered ambiguous since they are sometimes allowed by the SPJ Code of Ethics:

- "Reporter uses false identity to obtain information." The Code addresses this in the section on "Seek Truth and Report It" when it states, "Avoid undercover or other surreptitious "methods of gathering information unless traditional, open methods will not yield information vital to the public" (SPJ, 2014). Although this is allowed by the Code under certain circumstances, only about 10% of respondents found it "Very" or even "Moderately" ethical. Most respondents found it "Slightly unethical" or "Very unethical."
- "Reporter uses an anonymous source." This is mentioned in two places in the Code. First, under "Seek Truth and Report It," the Code states, "Identify sources clearly. The public is entitled to as much information as possible to judge the reliability and motivations of sources" (SPJ, 2014). Under the same section, the Code further states, "Consider sources' motives before promising anonymity. Reserve anonymity for sources who may face danger, retribution or other harm, and have information that cannot be obtained elsewhere. Explain why anonymity was granted" (SPJ, 2014). A majority of respondents

found this “Very” or “Moderately ethical,” while 20% found it “Slightly unethical” or “Very unethical.”

- “Reporter uses hidden cameras or microphones.” The Code stipulates when this type of reporting is acceptable in the section under “Seek Truth and Report It,” which states, “Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information unless traditional, open methods will not yield information vital to the public” (SPJ, 2014). Very few respondents found this ethical.

Situations Sometimes Considered Unethical. In addition to situations specifically addressed in the Code, some additional situations were included because they can sometimes be considered unethical. Whether or not these situations are ethically acceptable depends largely on each reporter’s personal ethical compass and/or policies specific to the organization the reporter works for. Additionally, these situations are especially relevant for student journalists who are often friends with their sources, work for organizations on tight budgets, and often do not make much money themselves.

- “Reporter spends occasional social evenings with a person he/she writes about regularly.” Some 66% of respondents found this to be “Very unethical” or “Slightly unethical,” while 31% found it to be “Very ethical.”
- “Reporter accepts free trip and that fact is included in story.” When the reporter included the fact in the story, those finding it “Very ethical” or “Moderately ethical” rose to 70%.

- "Reporter shoots freelance photos (and is paid for them) from an organization he/she covers regularly." Of those surveyed, about half said this was "Very unethical," or "Moderately unethical," with half saying it "Slightly unethical" or "Very unethical."
- "Reporter changes direct quotes to correct a source's grammar." The responses to this question were nearly evenly divided, with about half calling it either "Very ethical," or "Moderately ethical," and half of respondents finding it either "Slightly unethical" or "Very unethical."
- "Photographer edits a feature photo to remove skin imperfections." Nearly a third of respondents found this situation to be "Very ethical" or "Moderately ethical." Two-thirds found it to be "Slightly unethical" or "Very unethical."

Situations That Are Not Considered Unethical. Finally, the survey contained several scenarios that are generally not considered unethical. They included:

- "Reporter asks 'pre-interview' or 'warm-up' questions off the record." A majority of respondents found this situation to be "Very ethical" or "Moderately ethical."
- "Reporter edits profanity out of a direct quote." Students responded similarly to this question, with 67% calling it "Very ethical" or "Moderately ethical," while 32% labeled it "Slightly unethical" or "Very unethical."
- "Reporter confirms facts in a story with a source before the story is published." Most respondents found this situation either "Very ethical" or "Moderately ethical."

Inferential Statistics and Hypotheses Testing

Having reviewed frequencies and descriptive statistics for the variables included in this research, the study now reports the results of its hypothesis testing. Hypotheses tested predictors of attitudes on the nine-item scale measuring unambiguous violations of journalist conduct.

H1 On measures pertaining to unambiguous ethical violations, students who received formal training in mass communication and/or general ethics will estimate significantly higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct than will students who had not completed an ethics class.

To test this hypothesis, the study first used a T-test to examine whether differences existed between those who had taken an ethics class and those who had not on the nine-item, 36-point scale. As indicated, this analysis involved collapsing the ethics item from four categories to two (taken class/not taken class). The mean scale score for those who had taken an ethics class (M=10.8427, SD=2.49043) was lower than the average for those who had not (M=12.3115, SD=3.15464). With unethical behavior represented by lower scores, the T-test (for equal variances not assumed) showed a significant difference t(207.660)=-3.777, $p < 001$, and therefore, on a bivariate level, the first hypothesis was supported.

To examine whether differences remained with multiple predictors analyzed simultaneously, ordinary least squares regression analysis tested the effects of gender (control), completion of an ethics course, familiarity with the SPJ Code of Ethics, and importance of religion on the scale measuring attitudes toward unambiguous ethical

violations. Table 3 shows the first of two regression analyses. In this table, the four independent variables explained 20.7% of the variance in the dependent measure. Regarding H1, those who had completed an ethics course identified significantly higher levels of unethical conduct than did those who had not taken a course (B = .275, SE = .135, $p < .05$), thus confirming the first hypothesis.

Table 2

Unambiguous items regression table with importance of religion

Item	*B*	*SE B*	B	*T*	*P*
Gender	-0.813	0.407	-0.126	-1.998	0.047
Taken ethics course	0.275	0.135	0.137	2.042	0.042
Familiar with SPJ code	-0.978	0.179	-0.367	-5.451	0.000
Importance of religion	0.266	0.149	0.113	1.781	0.076

H2 On measures pertaining to unambiguous ethical violations, students who are familiar with the SPJ Code of ethics will estimate significantly higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct than students who are not familiar with the Code.

First, a Pearson's bivariate correlation coefficient showed a value of -.421, which was significant at $p < .001$. This negative correlation indicates that the more students were familiar with the Code, the more they found the nine unambiguous situations to be unethical. In the regression analysis shown in Table 3, familiarity with the SPJ Code significantly predicted attitudes toward unambiguous ethical violations (B = -.978, SE = .179, $p < .001$), with those familiar estimating higher levels of unethical conduct. H2 was therefore supported in the bivariate and multivariate analyses.

H3 On measures pertaining to unambiguous ethical violations, students who have been in school longer will estimate significantly higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct.

A Pearson's bivariate correlation coefficient showed a value of -.180, which was significant at $p < .01$. This negative correlation indicates that the longer students had been in school, the more they found the nine unambiguous situations to be unethical. However, in a multiple regression analysis, year in school did not show significance, and it explained little variance. It was therefore dropped as a predictor. H3 was supported at the bivariate level, but not at the multivariate.

H4a On measures pertaining to unambiguous ethical violations, students who score higher on how important religion is to their lives will estimate significantly higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct than will students who score lower on how important religion is to their lives.

A Pearson's bivariate correlation coefficient showed a value of .164, which was significant at $p < .05$. This positive correlation indicates that students who indicated higher levels of importance for religion in their lives estimated higher levels of ethical conduct among journalists, moving against the hypothesis. In the regression equation shown in Table 3, importance of religion was not significant (B = .266, SE = .149, p = .076), so H4a is therefore rejected.

H4b On measures pertaining to unambiguous ethical violations, students who attend religious services more often will estimate significantly higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct than will students who attend religious services less often.

A Pearson's bivariate correlation coefficient showed a value of .177, which was significant at $p < .01$. This positive correlation indicates that students who attended religious services more frequently estimated more ethical conduct, thus moving against H4b. When the measure of religious service attendance was added to the regression analysis shown in Table 3, the variable showed collinearity with religious importance. Importance of religion was therefore removed, and frequency of religious service attendance replaced it. In the resulting regression equation (see Table 4), frequency of church attendance showed significance (B = .249, SE = .123, $p < .05$), but in a direction opposite that hypothesized. Measures included in the regression analysis containing religious service attendance explained 19.9% of the variance in the dependent measure. But H4b was rejected given the directionality of church attendance.

Table 3

Unambiguous items regression table with religious service attendance

Item	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*T*	*P*
Gender	-0.727	0.400	-0.114	-1.816	0.071
Taken ethics course	0.267	0.134	0.133	1.995	0.047
Familiar with SPJ code	-0.937	0.177	-0.355	-5.285	0.000
Religious service attendance	0.249	0.123	0.127	2.015	0.045

Having responded to the hypotheses advanced in the study, the research now examines bivariate associations between the explanatory measures just discussed and the ambiguous ethics situations. These did not lend themselves to scale construction in a manner similar to the nine unambiguous items.

Ambiguous Ethical Situations

RQ1 To what extent do (a) level of education, (b) completion of an ethics course, (c) familiarity with the SPJ Code of Ethics, (d) religious importance, and (e) church attendance associate with attitudes toward additional ethics situations?

Table 2 shows a correlation matrix for additional ethics situations. These situations are ambiguous since they are mentioned in the Code and allowed under certain circumstances. These include:

- Photographer edits a feature photo to remove skin imperfections.
- Reporter spends occasional social evenings with a person he/she writes about regularly.
- Reporter uses false identity to obtain information.
- Reporter accepts free trip and that fact is included in story.
- Reporter shoots freelance photos (and is paid for them) from an organization he/she covers regularly.
- Reporter uses an anonymous source.
- Reporter uses hidden cameras or microphones.
- Reporter changes direct quotes to correct a source's grammar

While prior review is not mentioned in the Code, two additional situations were added to the matrix because they are general considered unethical by most practicing journalists:

- Reporter shows a source a story before it is published.
- Reporter allows a source access to questions before an interview.

Table 4

Ambiguous items matrix

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
1. Gender	1	-.161*	.042	.017	-.031	-.007	-.063	-.111	-.205**	-.134	.006	.117	-.055	-.164*	.088	.059
2. Year in school		1	-.335**	.378**	.067	-.143*	-.063	-.146*	-120	-102	-.039	.001	.015	.101	-.075	-.065
3. Academic ethic course			1	-.344**	.049	.049	.146*	.090	.133	.059	-.086	-.023	.049	.007	.099	.047
4. Familiarity with SPJ code				1	-.122	-.099	-.139*	-.184*	-.152*	-.020	-.197	-.147*	-.054	.012	-.129	-.070
5. Importance of religion					1	.798**	.105	.083	.120	-.050	.024	.104	-.118	.075	.019	-.039
6. Religious service attendance						1	.118	.133	.166*	-.069	.038	.200**	.-007	.076	.005	-.040
7. Remove skin imperfections							1	172*	.181**	.060	-.224**	.247**	.039	.187**	.131	.065
8. Show story before published								1	.235**	.097	.211**	.267**	-.042	.094	.354**	.136*
9. Social evenings									1	.150	.135*	.317**	.078	.278**	.154*	.186**
10. False identity										1	.141*	.076	.100	.415**	.018	-.003
11. Free trip (included in story)											1	.289*	.150*	.117	189**	.173*
12. Freelance photos												1	.151*	.101	.129	.287**
13. Anonymous source													1	.164*	.063	.125
14. Hidden cameras														1	-035	.010
15. Access to questions															1	.182
16. Corrects grammar																1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

RQ1a - Year in School

Using Pearson's correlation coefficient, significance was found between year in school and "Reporter shows a source a story before it is published." The negative correlation meant that the longer the respondent had been in school, the more he/she found the situation to be "Very unethical." Since only one question showed a relationship, it appears that level of education had minimal effects on attitudes toward the additional ethics situations.

RQ1b - Completion of Ethics Class

No significance was found between the completion of an ethics class (journalism/mass communication, general, or both) and any of the situations. Therefore, it appears the completion of a course did not influence attitudes toward additional ethics situations.

RQ1c -Familiarity with the SPJ Code of Ethics

When it came to familiarity with the SPJ Code of Ethics, three situations showed significance using Pearson's coefficient. "Reporter shows a source a story before it is published," "Reporter spends occasional social evenings with a person he/she writes about regularly," and "Reporter shoots freelance photos (and is paid for them) from an organization he/she covers regularly." All of these items showed a negative correlation indicating that the more familiar the student was with the Code, the more he/she found the situation "Very unethical." With three items showing correlations, there is some

evidence that familiarity with the SPJ Code affected attitudes toward the additional ethics situations. Still, familiarity with the Code did not predict attitudes on other items.

RQ d and RQ1e - Religion

Two of the questions about religion were tested with Pearson's correlation coefficient. There were no correlations between any of the ambiguous situations and the question, "How important is religion to your life?" There were, however, positive correlations between attendance at religious services and two items: "Reporter spends occasional social evenings with a person he/she writes about regularly" and "Reporter shoots freelance photos (and is paid for them) from an organization he/she covers regularly." For these two items, the more the participant attended religious services, the more he/she would find the ambiguous items "Very ethical." With only two questions showing significant correlations in any direction, it can be determined that importance of religion and attendance at religious services had little to no effect on the students' attitudes towards the ambiguous ethical situations.

Having reviewed descriptive statistics as well as the results of hypothesis testing and research questions, the dissertation now turns to a discussion of its quantitative findings.

Discussion

Like their professional counterparts, student journalists encounter ethical dilemmas in reporting the news. In some instances, they face situations their colleagues in "the real world" do not face. For example, in 2018, students at a university in the Western United States ran into an ethical dilemma when a journalism professor was put on administrative leave after shouting at an administrative assistant, and sending an expletive-laden manifesto to university administrators. This was followed by a live-stream rant about the university. The school responded with an equally shocking text barring the professor from campus. Several students working for the university newspaper had taken at least one class from this professor. Editors and managers in the student newsroom therefore had to navigate how to fairly cover this public event and allow students who had established academic and personal relationships with the professor to respond appropriately. Such situations are not uncommon in student media. In fact, almost 90% of students in our survey said they frequently or occasionally encountered situations where they had to make an ethical decision. But how are these decisions being made, and what tools are students using when making them? These are the questions that prompted our fall 2019 survey of students working in university and college media across the country. Resulting data answered some of these questions and raised more about student journalists and ethical decision-making.

The first hypothesis predicted that students who had received formal training in mass communication and/or general ethics would estimate higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct on the nine-item unambiguous scale. The support of H1 indicates

that we need to continue training our students formally in ethics, whether that is a journalism or mass communication course or something more general. Of those students surveyed, only 29% had taken a journalism or mass communication course. Another 8% had taken a general ethics course, and 4% had taken both. Little over half of the students in the survey (58%) had not taken any formal ethics course. While the discipline has come a long way in offering formal ethics education, there is still a ways to go. We have to find ways to ensure that ethics is taught as well as caught. When designing the outcomes of an ethics course, instructors should keep in mind the Hastings Committee recommendations and ensure that their courses are meeting these goals. The first is to stimulate the moral imagination by eliciting empathy, feeling, caring, and sensibility. We need to do more than present case studies to our students; we need to offer them examples of how what they do affects real people's lives. Journalists have a lot of encouragement to remain unbiased and impartial, detached even. This can be tempered with a push for the student journalist to also think about how his/her actions can cause harm to those he or she is covering. This is especially prevalent in communitarian ethics with its emphasis on the "Other." Instructors need to branch beyond the teachings of Aristotle, Mill, and Kant and include Gilligan, Noddings, and Confucius. This takes more time in an ethics course which is already crowded with theorists, case studies, and codes of ethics, but it is important.

The second hypothesis predicted that students who were familiar with the SPJ Code of Ethics would estimate higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct on the nine-item unambiguous scale. As anticipated, we found that students who were familiar with

the SPJ Code of Ethics were more likely to find these highly unscrupulous situations to be "Very unethical." The most striking example was the last question on the survey, which asked for a response to a reporter taking money from a source to print a story without labeling it as a paid advertisement. The SPJ Code addresses this act in its first section on "Seek Truth and Report It" when it states, "Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and avoid political and other outside activities that may compromise integrity or impartiality, or may damage credibility" (SPJ, 2014). This sentiment is echoed later in the Code: "Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; do not pay for access to news. Identify content provided by outside sources, whether paid or not" (SPJ, 2014). Some 88% of the students surveyed (n=214) said that this would be "Very unethical," and another 10% said it would be "Slightly unethical." Only about 1% found it to be "Very ethical," and 1% indicated it was "Moderately ethical."

While other response patterns were not as dramatic, they often showed an agreement with what is considered unethical in the profession or is stated as unprofessional in the Code. For example, two questions addressed plagiarism: "Reporter rewrites story from competitor without verifying information" and "Information from a website is used in a story without attribution." Not only is this a general ethical issue, it is specifically addressed in the SPJ code under "Seek Truth and Report It" when the Code states, "Never plagiarize. Always attribute." (SPJ, 2014) For the first question on rewriting a story, 87% of respondents said it was "Very unethical," while less than 1% said it was "Very ethical." For the second question regarding using unattributed

information from a website, 77% said it was “Very unethical” with less than 1% saying it was “Very” or even “Moderately” ethical. It is important in these days of cutting and pasting from the Internet to recognize that copying stories from a website without attribution is plagiarism. The rise of plagiarism detection tools may have made students more squeamish about lifting text from a website than they were in the past. While most student media outlets do not run stories through “Turn It In” or similar plagiarism detection programs, students may have learned in their English classes that detecting plagiarism is as easy as pasting a sentence into a search engine and seeing if it can be found on the Internet. In any case, students recognize that plagiarism is not an acceptable practice, especially those who were familiar with the SPJ Code.

The conflict of interest situations can be especially problematic for students, who often do not have financial means to purchase tickets. In addition, they are more often friends with their sources than a professional journalist would be. While it may be reasonable to ask students not to have close relationships with those they cover, a relationship is often unavoidable. The SPJ Code addresses conflict of interest in the first section when it states, “Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived. Disclose unavoidable conflicts” (SPJ, 2014). The first item on our survey stated a common conflict of interest scenario; “Reporter is a member of a club or organization that he/she writes about regularly.” Some 81% of respondents found this situation to be “Very” or “Slightly” unethical while 20% found it “Very” or “Moderately” ethical. This is especially interesting in light of the fact that the respondents are students. The 80% who find this situation unethical would feel obligated to give up club membership if they are

covering that organization and wanted to remain ethical. This shows a dedication to their craft and the profession at a level of maturity that is notable.

The next conflict of interest situation was addressed in this question: "Reporter makes campaign contribution to official he/she writes about regularly." While students are usually not in the position to make a campaign contribution to an official they cover, it is interesting to note that less than 20% of respondents found this situation ethical, with 83% finding it "Very" or "Slightly" unethical. Students may not be in a position to make contributions to "officials," such as student government leaders, whom they cover regularly, but when they begin working professionally, they already know that this is an unethical action to take.

Next, students were asked about two conflict of interest situations regarding "freebies." The first question states, "Reporter receives reduced rate from company/organization he/she covers on a regular basis." Only one student found this situation "Very ethical" and an additional 20 (9%) found it "Moderately ethical." However, 89% of those surveyed found the situation "slightly unethical" or "very unethical." The second question is a bit more specific: "Reporter writes a travel story and receives free lodging from a resort mentioned in the story; reporter does not reveal that he/she received free lodging." For this question, 16% of students (36) found it "Very ethical" or "Moderately ethical." Those finding it "Slightly unethical" were 26% (55) and those finding it "Very unethical" were 57% (123). It is tempting, when one is not working full time and living on a student's budget, to accept "freebies", and while it may be acceptable to do so if one is not writing a story on the organization, most professionals

eschew this practice. Some journalists will not even share cab fare with sources. It is well established in the profession that accepting goods or services from a source is unethical even if the source does not make the offer on the condition that the reporter writes a favorable story. There is always the appearance that such an offer is made in exchange for favorable coverage.

The last two questions regarding unambiguous situations addressed the distortions of fact or context. This is dealt with in the Code when it states, "Never deliberately distort facts or context, including visual information. Clearly label illustrations and re-enactments." (SPJ, 2014) One question addressed this situation head-on: "Reporter presents images or sounds that are re-enacted without informing the public." While student media practitioners do not always have access to the tools and materials to create re-enactments, they may someday be working for organizations that do. A majority of those asked (88%) said that re-enactments are "Slightly" or "Very" unethical. The second question was inspired by a photo often used as an example of unethical photo tampering. Allan Detrich was a respected photojournalist with the *Toledo Blade*, in Ohio. A four-time Ohio News Photographer of the Year, in 1998 he was a runner-up for a Pulitzer Prize for his reportage. Yet in 2007, his editor called him a "serial manipulator of photos." In one year alone, Detrich had manipulated more than 70 photos intended for publication, including one of a ball leaving the hands of a basketball player, heading for the basket (Winslow, 2012). While digital imaging has many advantages, it also raises new ethical dilemmas when the editor can manipulate photographs easily, turning something good into something perfect. In the case of Detrich's photo, the ball had been there at one

point, but not when the shutter of the camera was snapped. Students in the author's ethics classes often point out that what Detrich did should not have gotten him fired since he wasn't making up information that hadn't happened. For some of today's students who have seen countless photo manipulations, such editing is acceptable as long as the final product actually happened, even if not captured by the camera. Yet, this type of photo manipulation is considered highly unethical in the profession and, as we have seen, many reporters in addition to Detrich have been fired for much less. With that in mind, it is concerning that nearly 30% of those surveyed found this to be either "Very" or "Moderately" ethical.

As we have seen, the second hypothesis was supported. Students who were familiar with the SPJ Code of Ethics perceived the nine situations as more unethical than did students who were unfamiliar with the Code. This is probably the most important finding of this study. Students need access to the SPJ Code and they need to know what it says. Those students who were familiar with the Code saw ethical violations where others didn't. The SPJ Code of Ethics is an important tool for students to have in their ethical toolbox.

The third hypothesis predicted that students who had been enrolled in school longer would estimate significantly higher levels of unethical journalistic conduct. While Lambeth et al.'s1994 study showed that more and more journalism and mass communication programs had added a free standing ethics course, and almost every program had some type of formal ethics training, many ethics courses are taught to upperclassmen. In a longitudinal study of students from freshman to senior year, Groshek

and Conway (2012) found that students became more ethically aware and less tolerant of ethical violations as they matured (p. 341). Our findings were indefinite on this question. There was significance on the bivariate level, but not the multivariate. Perhaps students should be exposed to ethics in an intentional way before they reach the upper level ethics course. While many journalism professors may believe that ethics is covered in their courses, they need to consider how deliberately this is done. To mention ethics offhand in a photojournalism class is not the same as having a specific ethics module on framing a photo and presenting it as reality. Many journalism programs have a graphics course which focuses on how to create original artwork and/or how to edit photographs. These courses as well could do with intentional teaching points about the ethics of photo manipulation and how to ethically take and present photographs.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that (a) those scoring higher on the importance of religion in their lives and (b) those attending church services more frequently would estimate significantly higher levels of journalistic misconduct than would other student respondents.

Questions on religiosity/spirituality were taken from a Pew Internet survey of 2015. Students were asked how often they attended religious services, how important religions was to their lives, and if they were personally a member of a house of worship. We found that while importance of religion predicted attitudes to some extent, an inverse correlation was found between religious service attendance and finding journalistic conduct unethical. This same inverse correlation was found between importance of religion and finding journalistic conduct unethical. Religion is a topic not often discussed

in secular universities, but our study indicates that spirituality may have at least some bearing on being ethical. An ethics course does not have to contain dogma for a particular branch of religion, but many religious ideas can be covered. The Dalai Lama has written a book on ethics, as well as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was imprisoned by the Nazis for speaking out about the regime. Craig and Ferre (2006) have discussed how the Christian principle of "agape" can be applied, even by atheists, to ethical problems. These ideas can be added to the portfolio created for students as they learn about many aspects of ethics.

While we observed significant associations between completion of an ethics course, familiarity with the SPJ Code of Ethics, and importance of religion and our nine-question index of *unambiguous* ethical violations, we found very little evidence that level of education, completion of an ethics course, familiarity with the SPJ Code of Ethics, importance of religion, or religious service attendance correlated with attitudes toward ambiguous ethical situations. However, a look at the frequencies shows some notable items. Two questions about prior review were included, and while they are not addressed directly in the SPJ Code of Ethics, they are considered highly unethical in the profession and were included in the ASNE/SPJ audit of 1988. The questions were, "Reporter allows a source access to questions before an interview" and "Reporter shows a source a story before it is published." The majority of students found them both to be "Slightly" or "Very" unethical. For the question about allowing a source to see questions before the interview, a little over half of the students (53%) found this unethical. This should cause

concern for those working with student journalists. Clearly, students do not know that this is considered to be prior-review and something that a journalist should never allow.

The second question about showing a source a story had 72% of respondents finding it "Slightly" or "Very" unethical, but that still left nearly 30% considering it to be an ethical practice. Again, this is considered a type of prior review or restraint, and something that students should not be practicing. If this becomes a habit in their work on student media, it could be taken into the workplace after graduation. Allowing a source to see a story before it is published gives that source the idea that he or she can make changes. The audience for a story needs to know that it is objective, unbiased, and written by someone who is not a part of the story. Even if the source doesn't make changes to the story, the practice implies that he or she could do so. It puts the objectivity of the story into question and places the student journalist in the precarious position of making changes just because a source does not like the way things are portrayed.

Two questions also addressed undercover reporting. The first item was "Reporter uses false identity to obtain information." This is explicitly covered in the Code when it states, "Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information unless traditional, open methods will not yield information vital to the public" (SPJ, 2014). Only 10% of those surveyed found this "Very" or "Moderately" ethical. Clearly, students are not comfortable with the idea of using a false identity, even though it is acceptable in some circumstances. It may be that student journalists are not yet experienced in investigative reporting techniques and do not have the skills and/or resources to go undercover at their schools. Another method of surreptitious information gathering was

covered in the item, “Reporter uses hidden cameras or microphones.” Less than 15% of those surveyed found this “Very” or even “Moderately” ethical. Again, it could be that student journalists to do not have access to the equipment needed for this type of investigation, so they haven’t considered if they would use it or not.

The use of anonymous sources is another situation that is sometimes allowed by the SPJ Code. The Code states, “Identify sources clearly. The public is entitled to as much information as possible to judge the reliability and motivations of sources” (SPJ, 2014). Additionally, “Consider sources’ motives before promising anonymity. Reserve anonymity for sources who may face danger, retribution or other harm, and have information that cannot be obtained elsewhere. Explain why anonymity was granted” (SPJ, 2014). Of those surveyed, more found this to be ethical than not. Nearly 80% of them found this “Very” (26%) or “Moderately” (53%) ethical. It is not known if students would run through the SPJ suggestions before using an anonymous source. Do they check to see if information can be obtained elsewhere? Do they explain why anonymity was granted? The author has found that students often want to use anonymous sources because those sources do not want to go on the record with their opinions. It’s one thing to criticize the president of the university under the cover of anonymity than to go on record with substantiated evidence of something the president could be doing better. In these cases, it is helpful to cite the SPJ Code, which suggests that anonymity only be used when no other method of information gathering is available and the reason for anonymity is explained.

The survey contained five additional questions about situations that were not specifically addressed in the Code, but are sometimes considered unethical. Whether or not these situations are ethical can depend on a number of factors, especially the policies of the organization the reporter is working for. One item of note is, “Reporter spends occasional social evenings with a person he/she writes about regularly,” Nearly a third of our respondents found this situation to be ethical, but most professionals would eschew the practice. It may be that student journalists more often encounter this situation since they are often friends with those whom they cover regularly. Another ambiguous situation was covered in the item, “Reporter shoots freelance photos (and is paid for them) from an organization he/she covers regularly.” Respondents were equally divided on whether or not this situation was ethical, with 50% finding it ethical and 50% finding it unethical. Again, students are in unique situations where they have connections with clubs and organizations that they may cover. In addition, students have the additional financial constraints making it more tempting, and possibly more acceptable, to take freelance work from a source. Another item of note was, “Photographer edits a feature photo to remove skin imperfections.” When creating this question, the words “feature photo” were deliberately included since it is generally more acceptable to change “soft” news photos than it is to change “hard” news photos. Only about a third of those surveyed found this to be ethical. This is an interesting contrast to the question about adding a ball to a photo. About 30% of those surveyed found both situations to be ethical, while in the professional world adding a ball is a much larger ethical breach than cleaning up some skin imperfections.

In terms of practical implications for student media, descriptive statistics associated with the question, “Have you had any ethics training as a member of student media?”, revealed that a little over half of those surveyed had received ethics training as a member of student media (54%), while a little less than half (41%) had not. This is an area that could be improved. Student media advisers are often constrained in how much ethics training they can undertake with student media. For example, if students are unfamiliar with AP Style as well as the SPJ code, the area that is more visible will probably be addressed first, and AP Style errors stand out.

Students were also asked if they had an informal ethics discussion in their work on student media. The results showed that 75% had either frequently or occasionally had these types of discussions. It is heartening to know that a majority of students are having these kinds of conversations, in light of their work on student media. However, the literature shows that informal talks are not enough. The Hastings Center recommendations call for systematic ethics training and the author would add, especially for student journalists, who are not public figures used to being in the spotlight, and whose work is public and has the potential to affect others. Some of the pedagogical techniques discussed in the literature can be easily adapted to the environment of staff meetings. The author is an advisor to a student website and magazine, and recognizes that meeting time is precious and not to be wasted, but ethics is too important to be left to chance. While advisors usually do not run these for student publications, the advisor could certainly be asked to introduce Kant, Aristotle, Mill, Gilligan, Confucius, and others briefly and systematically. Analyses of case studies can be completed in 10 to 15

minutes. While a movie is probably beyond the time limits of student media staff meetings, an aesthetic experience, through art or music, could certainly be created to stimulate the moral imagination of collegiate journalists.

Today's student journalists are working in a world of rapidly changing technology, but ethics is timeless. One hundred years ago, journalists were concerned with prior restraint and censorship, and things haven't changed much since then. In the fall of 2019, student journalists at Chapman University in California had to make a difficult ethical decision when former president George W. Bush came to their campus as part of an event commemorating the 20th anniversary of the naming of the business school. Students were told that Bush's staff wanted to see everything before it was printed and in return, the student media would be the only media allowed at the event. Students had to weigh this unprecedented access with allowing a source to censor content before it was published. "We sat on it for a while, ruminating on what we were going to do and what we were comfortable with," said the newspaper's Editor-in-Chief Louisa Marshall. "We decided not to go" (Filak, 2019). The paper then published a story about the situation, what they were asked to do and why they made the decision they had made. After the story came out, the editors learned that it was not, after all, Bush's staff who wanted the prior restraint, but the university wanted to see what the paper was going to publish beforehand. Although the editors at Chapman's *The Panther* newspaper were "just students," they encountered a situation that professional journalists come up against at some point: a source who wants to see the story before it is released to the public. Marshall said:

> There is a certain level of fearlessness that comes with student journalism overall. I think I would really stress to someone wanting to be in student media that even though we're all young and ambitious, we have to cover our bases. The whole aspect of maintaining integrity is to maintain well-rounded reporting. It's walking an interesting line. (Filak, 2019).

Our colleges and universities are filled with young, ambitious students who need to make courageous decisions while working for student media. Did the Chapman students have any ethics training? We don't know for sure, but they, like nearly 90% of our respondents, encountered an ethical dilemma while working for student media. The Chapman students may have had access to an ethics code, previous ethics courses and training, and an advisor to coach them, but not all student journalists do. For many of them, ethics decisions are made "on the fly," using just their intuition. It doesn't really matter which decision they make. Whether they allow themselves to be censored, whether they publish the controversial photo, whether they lift a quote from a website without attribution, they need some tools in their toolbox. This is where advisors and faculty can make a difference. Instead of intuition and a certainty in being brought up "right," students can look to sources calling for mass media practitioners to make ethical decisions in a world that has become global. It is up to those of us who teach and coach student journalists to offer them a generous portfolio of tools to use when making ethical decisions in their first journalism experiences on student media.

Appendix 1

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

SURVEY TITLE: Acceptability of Journalistic Practices

INTRODUCTION: Thank you for participating in our investigation of journalistic practices in student media. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete, and all of your responses will be kept anonymous and strictly confidential. Please be as open and honest as possible. **Your responses to the survey are voluntary**. By submitting this survey, you are giving your informed consent for your anonymous responses to be used in this research study. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact Karyn Campbell at karync@g.clemson.edu. We invite you to forward the link to this survey to your colleagues in student media, which will allow us to obtain a larger sample of responses.

PART 1 INSTRUCTIONS: The following situations are often encountered by journalists. For each situation, indicate if the action is or is not an ethical violation. Please evaluate each case against ethical policies you would set, not the written or unwritten standards of your organization or any other organization for which you may have worked.

1. Reporter is a member of a club or organization that he/she writes about regularly.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

2. Reporter makes campaign contribution to official he/she writes about regularly.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

3. Photographer edits a feature photo to remove skin imperfections.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

4. Reporter receives reduced rate from company/organization he/she covers on a regular basis.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

5. Reporter rewrites story from competitor without verifying information.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

6. Information from a website is used in a story without attribution.

    - Extremely ethical
    - very ethical
    - moderately ethical
    - slightly unethical
    - not at all ethical

7. Reporter shows a source a story before it is published.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

8. Reporter confirms facts in a story with a source before the story is published.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

9. Reporter spends occasional social evenings with a person he/she writes about regularly.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical

- Slightly unethical
- Very unethical

10. Reporter uses false identity to obtain information.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

11. Reporter writes a travel story and receives free lodging from a resort mentioned in the story; reporter does not reveal that he/she received free lodging.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

12. Reporter accepts free trip and that fact is included in story.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

13. Reporter shoots freelance photos (and are paid for them) from an organization he/she covers regularly.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

14. Reporter uses an anonymous source.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

15. Reporter presents images or sounds that are re-enacted without informing the public.

- Very ethical
- Moderately ethical
- Slightly unethical
- Very unethical

16. Reporter uses hidden cameras or microphones.

- Very ethical
- Moderately ethical
- Slightly unethical
- Very unethical

17. Reporter asks “pre-interview” or “warm-up” questions off the record.

- Very ethical
- Moderately ethical
- Slightly unethical
- Very unethical

18. Reporter edits profanity out of a direct quote.

- Very ethical
- Moderately ethical
- Slightly unethical
- Very unethical

19. Photographer edits a sports photo to add in a ball that was really there, but not present the exact second the photo was taken.

- Very ethical
- Moderately ethical
- Slightly unethical
- Very unethical

20. Reporter allows a source access to questions before an interview.

- Very ethical
- Moderately ethical
- Slightly unethical
- Very unethical

21. Reporter changes direct quotes to correct a source’s grammar.

- Very ethical
- Moderately ethical
- Slightly unethical
- Very unethical

22. Reporter takes money from a source to print a story; does not label it as paid advertisement.

    - Very ethical
    - Moderately ethical
    - Slightly unethical
    - Very unethical

PART 2 INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the following questions.

1. Have you taken an academic ethics course?
    - Yes, journalism or mass communication ethics
    - Yes, general ethics
    - Both of the above
    - No
    - Other _____

2. Have you had any ethics training as a member of student media?
    - Yes, an ethics workshop, lecture or similar formal activity as part of student media training.
    - No
    - Other _____

3. How often have you had informal ethics discussion in your work on student media (not a formal ethics course)?
    - Frequently
    - Occasionally
    - Rarely
    - Never

4. How often have you encountered a situation where you had to make an ethical decision on student media?
    - Frequently
    - Occasionally
    - Rarely
    - Never

5. How familiar are you with the Society of Professional Journalist's Code of Ethics?
    - Very familiar
    - Somewhat familiar
    - A little familiar
    - Not at all familiar

6. How often have you used the SPJ Code of Ethics when making ethical decisions on student media?
    - Frequently
    - Occasionally
    - Rarely
    - Never

7. Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?
    - More than once a week
    - Once a week
    - Once or twice a month
    - A few times a year
    - Never

8. How important is religion in your life?
    - Very important
    - Somewhat important
    - Not too important
    - Not at all important

9. Are you personally a member of a local synagogue, mosque, temple, church or other house of worship?
    - Yes
    - No

PART 3 INSTRUCTIONS: Please choose the appropriate answer to the following demographic questions:

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Nonbinary
- Other

What year are you in school?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 4

I work for a (choose all that apply)

- TV station
- radio station
- newspaper
- website
- yearbook
- other

I am a/an (choose all that apply)

- Editor-In-Chief/ Station Manager
- Editor/Producer
- Writer/Announcer
- Other

What state is your school located in?

What is the size of your school?

- Less than 5,000
- 5,000-10,000
- 10,001-20,000
- More than 20,000
- Don’t Know

Please choose which best describes your school (choose all that apply)

- Public (state)
- Private
- 2-year
- 4-year
- Affiliated with a religion

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